

Understanding the Role of Alcohol during Rape: The Perfect Storm of Attention, Emotion, & Expectancies

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ABSTRACT: Sex offenders and violent offenders in general that were intoxicated at the time of their offense often claim that they were too intoxicated to know 1) what they were doing at the time of the offense and 2) therefore unable to recall the details of the offense situation the next day. What the literature has to say contradicts the claims of sex offenders or violent offenders who claim they were “out of control” and that they do not recall what they did in the offense situation. Alcohol use (mild to moderate consumption) appears to result in 1) alcohol myopia; 2) increased attentional focus on the more salient emotions (whether negative or positive); 3) improved creative thinking and improved attention to the activity at hand; 4) decreased frontal lobe activity (e.g., lack of concern about consequences or morals); 5) is impacted by alcohol expectancies; and 6) does not prevent an individual from being able to recall activity that occurred while intoxicated when provided cues.

KEY WORDS: Sex offenders, sexual abusers, forensic assessment, alcohol and rape

INTRODUCTION

Because sex offenders and violent offenders often claim that they were intoxicated at the time of a crime they plead for mercy. And then many also claim that they did not know what they were doing during the offense situation and that they would never rape. In addition they claim that they are unable to recall what they did during the offense situation. Despite the reality that they were well aware of the choices they made during the offense situation and that they can indeed recall most if not all of the offense details, sometimes public opinion and the Courts play into their naïve belief and allow a sex offender or violent offender to receive little if any appropriate consequence. The idea that a person does not know what he or she is doing while intoxicated is not supported by current data. Drunk drivers know enough and are aware enough to know where to turn, how to avoid police detection, what the road speeds are, and respond to other cars. In fact, they often make it home, even though they may park their car in the neighbor’s yard! He/she demonstrate decreased motor skills but are able to navigate the environment with some degree of accuracy. I would argue that it would be impossible to drive home if you were not aware of what you were doing despite being intoxicated.

Sexual activity involves a significant physiological and emotional arousal. This arousal involves increased heart rate and breathing, increased blood flow to the genitals, and intense positive emotions. To believe that somehow a person would not be aware of this arousal experience is impossible. While intoxicated, the physiological sexual arousal (e.g., erection) would likely be impaired to some degree due to the depressing effect of alcohol. However, the pleasurable feelings and pleasurable physiological arousal would likely be increased due to the effects of alcohol. On the other hand, if a person was experiencing negative emotions prior to becoming intoxicated, these negative emotions (e.g., anger, disappointment, frustration, jealousy) would likely be increased due to the effect of alcohol.

To not know what he/she was doing while intoxicated is another issue. If he/she was not aware of what they were doing at the time, they would likely be passed out. Even with the impairment resulting from intoxication, if they are conscious, they are aware of the decisions

they make. How else would he/she be able to engage in the activity (e.g., sex), leave the situation, and then return to a state of normalcy?

The purpose of this review is to examine the effects of alcohol on the decision making process of behavior, focusing on rape. In addition, to examine how memory is impacted by intoxication in regards to not being able to remember a specific act committed while intoxicated.

The terms sexual assault, rape, date rape, and child molestation as referring to the same- that is, pressured or forced sex and therefore may be used in this article interchangeably. Perpetrator and offender will refer to someone who has committed a sexual offense or violent offense.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS & RAPE

Despite recent discussion about the use of date rape drugs to facilitate a sexual assault or rape, research supports that alcohol, not drugs, is by far the most significant substance used by sex offenders in the commission of their crimes (Hindmarch et al., 2001; Grubin & Gunn, 1990; Horvath, 2006; Koss, 1985; Koss & Dinero, 1989; LeBeau et al., 1998; Scott-Ham & Burton, 2005; Seifert, 1999; Slaughter, 2000; Walby & Allen, 2004). In fact many rapists not only admitted that they had used alcohol before and/or during the commission of their sex offense but many even blamed their alcohol use for their offense behavior (e.g., Abbey et al., 2001; Kanin, 1984). Alcohol was related to the commission of physical aggression among women abusers and cocaine was found to be associated with coerced sexual activities (Stuart, Moore, Elkins, et al., 2013). However, by far more men than women appear more likely to engage in forced sexual activity when intoxicated.

Intoxicated males were more likely to misinterpret the sexual cues of females and were also more likely to ignore signs of unwillingness or resistance in regards to sexual situations (e.g., Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, et al., 2004; Adam-Curtis & Forbes, 2004; Norris & Kerr, 1993; Rickert & Weinmann, 1998). Even moderate alcohol consumption appears to make perpetrators feel more confident about their decision to utilize psychological and physical force to gain sexual contact (Abbey et al., 2001). In addition, increasing alcohol use by the perpetrator correlates with greater use of force; however, at extreme levels of impairment/intoxication, perpetrators utilize less force

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(Abbey, Clinton-Sherrod, McAuslan, et al., 2003). This is likely the result of the depressing effect of alcohol on motor skills.

What the above suggests is that alcohol, not drugs, are involved in the majority to sex crimes. In addition, perpetrators blame their alcohol use for the sexual aggression (Tolfreya, Foxb, & Jeffcote, 2011). The offender's externalization suggests that they do not take responsibility for their violent behavior or their behavior in general and may relate to their (offender's) degree of impulsivity (Gudjonsson, Petursson, Sigurdardottir, et al., 1991). The use of alcohol could result in alcohol myopia (narrowing of attention), informational processing errors, lessened executive functioning capabilities (e.g., problem solving, managing stress, managing negative emotions), misinterpretation of social cues, and increased acceptance of the use of aggression (e.g., Giancola, 2000a; Steele & Josephs, 1990). In essence, under provocative situations that produce negative emotions, alcohol increases the likelihood of aggression.

When the victim is consuming alcohol or intoxicated, it is far less likely that she will be able to successfully resist or escape the situation. The alcohol may impair her ability to perceive attempts to control her, changes in the perpetrator's attitude or behavior, or attempts to isolate her (e.g., trying to isolate the woman, encouraging her to drink heavily) and impairs her ability to effectively verbally or physically resist him (Abbey, Clinton, McAuslan, et al., 2002; Norris, Nurius, & Dimeff, 1996; Ullman, Karabatsos, & Koss, 1999). In addition, victims who were intoxicated at the time of the assault may at least partially blame themselves for being raped (Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, et al., 2001). This may result in fewer victims reporting the rape due to blaming herself. The reason for victims blaming themselves is in part due to the Rape Myth Acceptance (RMA's) beliefs that somehow being intoxicated was a signal of wanting sexual contact, or that somehow being intoxicated made her less worthy to refuse sexual advances. Worse, victims may believe that their own intoxication prevented them from being able to detect all of the control strategies the perpetrator was using, and therefore in some way, she was asking to be raped. Victims often speak of doubting that in some way they were responsible for having been raped, and alcohol increases this phenomenon.

IMPACT OF ALCOHOL

Alcohol intoxication results in impaired functioning in several cognitive areas. This includes selective attention, working memory, and response selection (e.g., Luck et al., 2000; Luck & Hillyard, 2000). Alcohol consumption may impact selective processes prompting the visual system to focus on specific details or events of a selected activity (De Cesarei, Codispoti, Schupp, et al., 2006). Increased alcohol consumption appears correlated with the likelihood of responding to others with aggression, which appears supported by the high incidence rates of alcohol-related violent crimes such as domestic assault, child abuse, and sexual assault and rape (Boden, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2012; Bushman & Cooper, 1990; Murdoch & Ross, 1990). Studies have found that alcohol consumption and aggression often go hand in hand; finding that approximately 50% of violent crime (Pernanen, 1991) and sexual assaults involved the use of alcohol (Abbey et al., 1998; Abbey, Zawacki, Buck, et al., 2004). In addition, many sex offenders and violent offenders blame their use of alcohol for their violent behavior (Amir, 1971; Sobell & Sobell, 1973; Critchlow, 1983; Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

When intoxicated and experiencing a perceived inequity or unfair request or limitation (negative cognition or negative emotion), the resulting negative emotions may be interpreted by an intoxicated individual as warranting an aggressive or punishing response (e.g., Blount, 1995; Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1990; Sanfey et al.,

2003). If an individual believes that it is appropriate to respond to rejection or a sense of inequity with aggression, then it is more likely that they will respond with aggression when intoxicated (Giancola et al., 2010; Morewedge, Krishnamurti, & Ariely, 2014).

This impact of intoxication does not appear to cause the aggressive behavioral response, but rather impacts the decision making abilities of the intoxicated individual. Further, the negative emotions or frustrated goals (e.g., to have sex or be rewarded) may become focused on (alcohol myopia, selective attention) and the expectancies of the intoxicated individual may include to become forceful or aggressive when demands or expectations are not met. Alcohol expectancies impact behavior as well.

SUBJECTIVE VERSUS OBJECTIVE INTOXICATION

Often sexual offenders and violent offenders in general claim that they were intoxicated at the time they commit an offense. However, because most offenders are not arrested within an hour of the crime, actual blood alcohol measurements are not possible. Therefore it is difficult to prove how many offenders were in fact intoxicated at the time of their crime and even so impossible to determine to what degree of intoxication they were (Johnson, 2007, pp. 149-150). Regardless, the degree to which an individual believes they are "intoxicated" (subjective intoxication) and the degree to which they actually are intoxicated (objective intoxication) may not matter in the decision making process of committing a violent crime. At least one study found that men who were intoxicated (objective intoxication) or believed that they were intoxicated (but had not consumed alcohol- subjective intoxication) were more likely to become aggressive when exposed to a high provocation situation (Giancola & Zeichner, 1995). Quinn & Fromme (2011) found in a college student sample that men who reported greater subjective intoxication were more likely to respond aggressively. College students reported aggression on drinking days in which they reported a higher subjective intoxication and they were in fact more likely to engage in aggression on subjective intoxication days (Quinn, Stappenbeck, & Fromme, 2013). This means that regardless of how many drinks were consumed, believing that they were in fact intoxicated, and reporting a high intoxication (subjective intoxication), resulted in more aggressive behavior. In essence, this supports alcohol expectancy theory that if the individual believes that when intoxicated it is appropriate to respond to negative situations with aggression, they are more likely to justify and respond more aggressively or violently when objectively or subjectively intoxicated.

Contextual cues appear to also impact alcohol-related aggression in that they may help focus the attention between the subjective intoxication and aggression (Giancola et al., 2010). Additional factors may impact the subjective intoxication and aggression relationship, including personality, alcohol expectancies, and individual response to physiological responses and activities (Quinn, Stappenbeck, & Fromme, 2013). In addition, having engaged in prior aggression may lead men to report higher levels of subjective intoxication (perhaps to justify the aggression or perhaps the cultural expectations that men who are intoxicated become aggressive). This suggests that when a man believes that he is intoxicated, even when he is not, and experiences provocation, the resulting negative emotional and cognitive impact (e.g., alcohol myopia, attentional focus, frustration and/or anger, sexual arousal, and RMA beliefs) increased the likelihood of aggression.

EMOTION & MOTIVATION

Numerous studies have demonstrated that certain emotional

states experienced while sexually aroused increase men's sexually aggressive behavior (e.g., Caprara et al., 1985; Dougherty, Marsh, Moeller, et al., 2000; Godlaski & Giancola, 2009; Mann & Hollin, 2007). Davis (2010) referred to these as sexual aggression congruent emotions and motivation, and studied their impact on sexually aggressive behavior and refusal to use a condom. The findings were that alcohol intoxication along with aggression related alcohol expectancies increased men's intentions to engage in sexually aggressive behavior. When intoxicated men in a sexual situation reported positive feelings such as power, impulsivity, arousal, anger, etc., sexually aggressive intentions increased. The stronger the men believed that alcohol would make them more aggressive (expectancies) the more they reported stronger sexual aggression congruent emotions and motivation. These findings are similar to other researchers as well (e.g., Valliere, 1997). In summary, alcohol expectancies strongly influence the desired or thought-about behavior while intoxicated.

ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958) refers to the cognitive process of how blame or responsibility is assigned to individuals regarding specific events or situations. There are two attributions we make. The first is a dispositional attribution, which involves attributing blame or responsibility for a situation or event to the persons' stable and enduring traits (e.g., an individual is a good/bad person). The second is a situational attribution, which involves attributing blame or responsibility to the situation versus the person. When dealing with pressured sex, often victims are judged responsible for in some way setting themselves up to be raped or somehow deserving to be raped which means utilizing a dispositional attribution towards the victim's behavior (e.g., Grubb, & Turner, 2012;). Often the perpetrator is viewed with a situational attribution, thereby failing to hold the perpetrator accountable for his/her actions (e.g., Rotter, 1996). For example, the victim is often seen as responsible for having a questionable character while the perpetrator of rape is often viewed as being misunderstood and therefore somehow unable to resist the temptation of the victim.

What the above suggests is that professionals and the community may blame the victim more than the perpetrator for sex crimes. This is especially true of date and acquaintance rape, and child molestations where the victim appears to have received some reward for the sexual activity. This may discourage victims from reporting sexual offenses or following through as a witness to prosecute sex offenders. Blaming the victim for being intoxicated, for having chosen to be alone with the perpetrator, or for having a prior sexual relationship with the perpetrator is common. Even on the news, it is common to hear about communities blaming the victim for being raped because of some action she took or failed to take, somehow forgetting that rape is a decision made by the perpetrator regardless of what the victim does or does not do.

RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE (RMA)

Rape Myth Acceptance refers to beliefs supporting and justifying forced sex. If someone holds beliefs that in certain situations it is acceptable to force or pressure sex, then they hold rape myth acceptance beliefs and would have moderate to high RMA's. Peer influence can increase RMA by encouraging and demonstrating RMA behavior and language (e.g., Bohner, Siebler, & Schmelcher, 2006). Socializing individuals who have RMA beliefs increase the chances of adopting the same RMA beliefs. Popular music, especially RAP, often sexualizes females and reinforces RMA beliefs. If a person holds RMA beliefs and attitudes, they are at higher risk of

engaging in forced and pressured sex (Bohner et al., 1998; Briere & Malamuth, 1983; Du Mont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003; Koralewski & Conger, 1992; Malamuth, 1981; Malamuth & Check, 1985; Tieger, 1981). It has been suggested that RMA beliefs and attitudes increase the likelihood of engaging in forced sexual interactions by serving as a psychological buffer against morals and values that might otherwise discourage engaging in forced sex situations (e.g., Grubb & Turner, 2012). Therefore, rape myths may offer sexual offenders justification for engaging in violent sexual behavior. In addition, rape myths (RMA) tend to hold the victim accountable for being raped, blaming the victim for any action that she took or failed to take (Abbey et al., 1998; Johnson et al., 1997; Kassing et al., 2005; Lambert & Raichle, 2000; Mynatt & Allgeier, 1990; Simms et al., 2007). In fact, prosecutors often refuse to prosecute rape cases in which the victim admitted to having flirted with an offender prior to an incident, allowed him to take her home, consented to some sexual acts, or was intoxicated at the time of the assault (Frohmann, 1991).

What the above suggests is that having rape supporting beliefs (RMA) makes it easier for a male to engage in pressured sex or rape. In addition, to some degree, professionals and the community may blame the victim more than the perpetrator for sex crimes. This may discourage victims from reporting or following through as a witness to prosecute sex offenders.

ALCOHOL EXPECTANCIES

Research has long supported that intoxicated men reported feeling stronger sexually aggressive congruent emotions and motivations (e.g., anger and arousal). Alcohol expectancies, that is, how a person expects to be impacted by the alcohol consumption, impacts sexually aggressive responses. For example, men with stronger expectations that they would behave more aggressively when intoxicated generally became more aggressive while intoxicated (Davis, 2010). This included reporting greater sexually aggressive congruent emotions and motivations than men with weaker alcohol-aggression expectancies. Men with greater sexual aggressive congruent emotions and motivations demonstrated greater sexual aggression intentions, which in turn resulted in these men likely to mislabel rape as consensual sexual contact.

Research has also demonstrated through laboratory experiments that when intoxicated, men reported greater sexually aggressive intentions towards women (Davis, Norris, George, et al., 2006; Marx, Gross, & Juergens, 1997; Norris, Davis, George, et al., 2002; Valliere, 1997). Intoxication has also been found to increase men's risky sexual intentions (MacDonald, Fong, Zanna, et al., 2000a; MacDonald, MacDonald, Zanna, et al., 2000b). Therefore the belief or expectations that alcohol use results in a particular behavioral outcome (e.g., sex or aggression) may actually be the result of self-fulfilling prophecy, not the impact of the alcohol directly (George & Stoner, 2000).

ALCOHOL MYOPIA

Alcohol myopia theory suggests that an intoxicated individual would be less likely to be distracted by extraneous or interfering stimuli (e.g., Clifasefi, Takarangi, & Bergman, 2006; Steele & Josephs, 1990). An intoxicated individual pays attention only to the most salient situational cues (Pernanen, 1976; Taylor & Leonard, 1983). If the salient situational cues focused on are those that inhibit sexually risky behavior, then the individual would not likely engage in sexually risky or aggressive sexual behavior (e.g., Davis, Hendershot, George, et al., 2007; MacDonald, et al., 2000a; Morrison et al., 2003). Intoxicated individuals were more attentive to the salient cue of sexual arousal versus inhibitory cues like sexual

risk or other negative aspects which offers further support for the alcohol myopia theory (Davis, Hendershot, George, et al., 2007; MacDonald, et al., 2000b). Situational and personal factors must also be considered with the alcohol myopia theory. For example, those who have a predisposition for perceiving greater negative consequences (e.g., frustration, refusals) may ignore sexual risk factors or force.

This suggests that when intoxicated, men experience a decreased capacity in cognition involving inhibitory cues (e.g., a woman's refusal to sex or request to use a condom) and an increase in capacity focusing attention on instigatory cues (e.g., sexual arousal or affective states). This cognitive focus increases the likelihood of engaging in risky or aggressive sexual behavior (Davis, Hendershot, George, et al., 2007; Testa, 2002). In summary, an intoxicated male would experience a narrow scope of attention, ignoring other stimuli, and therefore require a focused attention, concentration and effort on the task at hand. In essence, to force sexual contact while intoxicated, an intoxicated male, experiencing alcohol myopia, would focus mostly on obtaining sexual contact and invest full attention on that alone, with less regard for consequences.

Alcohol myopia and alcohol expectancies are related and not necessarily separate processes (Morris & Albery, 2001; Moss, A. C., & Albery, 2009). For example, preexisting expectancies may moderate the impact of intoxication on behavioral intentions (e.g., having previous experiences of being intoxicated and having sex, now these experiences are expectancies, but may impact the next intoxicated sexual experience). Davis et al. (2007) found that an individual's expectancies steer their myopia attention towards stimuli compatible with their expectancies, therefore focusing on the expected sexual outcome. Alcohol use increases the likelihood of using aggression by the resulting narrowing of focus and attention on to the negative (Giancola, 2002b; Giancola, Josephs, Parrott, et al., 2010). This is particularly true when experiencing negative and/or provocative emotions (e.g., anger, frustration). There is a significant increased likelihood of physical aggression against a partner when drinking, higher for males than females (Rothman, et al., 2012; Moore, Elkins, McNulty, Kivisto, & Handsel, 2011). Women were more likely to be victims of sexual coercion when using alcohol or cocaine (Stuart, Moore, Elkins, et al., 2013).

PORNOGRAPHY & ALCOHOL

Pornography can be defined as any sexually explicit material, and much of the material often contains sexist and degrading toward women, men, or children. When exposed to extreme or violent pornography, many people may become upset and disgusted and stop viewing it. Upon repeated viewing, however, typically both men and women develop more callous and negative attitudes towards rape victims and placed less responsibility on the perpetrator of the rape (Corne et al., 1992; Cowan & Campbell, 1995). This is even truer when the depicted victim appears to have deserved to be raped or enjoyed the rape. Sexual arousal may be the reason for why sexual aggression becomes more acceptable (Malamuth & Check, 1980), with sexual arousal acting as reinforcement.

Becoming desensitized to more extreme pornography can be explained by cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). Cognitive dissonance is the result of an inconsistency between an individual's beliefs or cognitions and a behavior. Dissonance is the resulting state which then motivates the person to attempt to alleviate the negative state. Festinger believed that cognitive dissonance created motivation to change either the belief or behavior. It was often easier to change one's beliefs and attitudes than to address and change the behavior (the behavior having positive reinforcement attributes) (e.g., Elliot

& DeVine, 1994). For example, viewing extreme, violent, or child pornography may at first be experienced as deviant and repulsing. However, over repeated viewing of such material, the individual experiences a negative cognitive and emotional state and either has to cease the behavior (e.g., stop viewing pornography) and maintain their current moral and value system or modify his beliefs to now accept the pornography as pleasing and acceptable.

Alcohol may increase sexual arousal due to expectancies, that is, expecting to experience more sexual arousal when intoxicated (George & Stoner, 2000; Leigh, 1990). Norris et al. (2004) found that even when an individual believed they consumed alcohol (even though they were not consuming alcohol) those that had strong sex related alcohol expectancies reported greater sexual arousal to violent pornography than those with weak sex-related alcohol expectancies. Even women were found to experience rape myth acceptance beliefs when they had strong sex-related alcohol expectancies (Davis, Norris, George, et al., 2006b). Violent pornography can be defined as sexually explicit material that contains acts of violence perpetrated by a man against a woman. Therefore, if an individual has strong alcohol-related expectancies that when they are intoxicated, they become more sexually aggressive, this is likely the result when they become intoxicated. This self-fulfilling prophecy does not cause violent sexual behavior, but rather predisposes an individual to invest more effort into obtaining sexual contact once intoxicated, therefore, this is a type of premeditation.

In addition, pornography involves fantasizing about engaging in sexual or aggressive behavior with the people being depicted (Johnson, 2007, pp. 151-168). When viewing violent and/or extreme pornography, the fantasies that are experienced result in sexual pleasure, a sense of power and dominance, and are reinforced with orgasm.

Then more the person views and masturbates to the pornography, the greater the likelihood that they will want to try and experience what they are viewing in real life (e.g., Prentky, Burgess, Rokous, et al., 1989; Ressler, Burgess, & Douglas, 1988; Schlesinger, 2000). Adding alcohol intoxication may increase the likelihood of enjoying more violent and extreme pornography, with intoxication not only providing a positive reinforce but also decreasing attention to executive functioning (e.g., morals, laws, etc.) therefore viewing pornography while intoxicated may well increase the likelihood of acting out the sexual fantasies (Johnson, 2007; Johnson, unpublished, 2014).

IMPACT OF ALCOHOL ON MEMORY AND ATTENTION

Many sexual offenders claim that they were intoxicated at the time of committing their crime and therefore cannot be held criminally responsible. It is as though they acted in a fog, with no ability to control their behavior. This belief may be further exacerbated when they claim they have a "blackout" and are unable to recall the day or time frame in question. So which is it, the inability to recall the event or a lack of knowledge about how they acted during the sexual assault situation.

Research suggests that executive functioning decreases with alcohol intoxication and that this provides benefits in problem solving. With lessened frontal lobe activity, deficits in attentional control may occur which may actually improve creative problem solving (Reverberi, Toraldo, D'Agostini, et al., 2005). Some have argued that alcohol intoxication does not impact attentional processes so much as it impacts attentional control (Saults, Cowan, Sher, et al., 2007). In research settings, intoxicated individuals were more likely to detect changes to detailed activity than non-intoxicated individuals (Colflesh & Wiley, 2013). Colflesh &

Wiley (2013) found that moderate intoxication does not limit the scope of attention but rather impairs attentional control or the ability to effectively engage in executive functioning. This suggests that intoxicated individuals decide to focus on a specific task and are able to effectively and accurately detect and react to changes in the current situational task even when decreased performance was noted. Intoxicated individuals also demonstrated improved problem solving, demonstrating that alcohol intoxication facilitates creative problem solving (Jarosz, Colflesh, & Wiley, 2012; Colflesh & Wiley, 2013). They found that intoxicated individuals perform better on creative problem solving tasks and found they solved the tasks much faster than sober counterparts. Intoxication also resulted in a decrease in working memory capacity, which implies less use of complicated problem solving strategies. Therefore intoxicated individuals are more likely to use less effortful approaches to address problems and are faster to seek out a quick response to the problem at hand (DeCaro, Thomas, & Beilock, 2008).

In addition, the effects of positive mood appear to increase creative problem solving capacities. This is especially true when coupled with decreased attentional controls as the executive functioning decreases when intoxicated. This results in the use of more associative memory to help with problem solving rather than using more executive processes (e.g., Subramaniam, Kounios, Parrish, et al., 2009). This may imply that the memory of having and/or expecting sexual contact is used to decide what behavior to engage in rather than focusing on the moral or legal standards or consequences which may prevent an aggressive response.

Alcohol intoxication improves creative thinking, attention to some detail, and therefore assists an individual in making choices to address problems, conflict, frustration, etc. Increased creative thinking suggests that the intoxicated individual is in fact able to develop new strategies to accomplish their goal of having sex. For example, to utilize creative thinking to counter victim resistance; to adjust or compromise specific sexual contact (to adjust to the victim's resistance or victim's lack of resistance, to adjust sexual contact or use of force to obtain desired sexual contact). Taking into account alcohol expectancies, alcohol myopia, and the above, if the individual was focusing on positive cognitions and emotions, perhaps there would be less likelihood of an aggressive response. If experiencing negative cognitions (e.g., RMA's) and negative emotions (e.g., frustration, anger, feeling victimized) there would be an increased likelihood of an aggressive response.

In regards to memory, alcohol was found to impair delayed memory and next-day recall. However, next-day cued recall was not impacted by alcohol use or intoxication (Reagan, Wetherill, & Fromme, 2011). This suggests that perpetrators who were consuming alcohol or intoxicated on the day they perpetrated an aggressive or sexually aggressive offense (or any offense) should be able to recall the details of the offense when provided cues about the incident. Those with a history of fragmented blackouts had more difficulty with delayed recall. Individuals with documented histories of blackouts, those with brain damage as a result of drinking, may have more difficulty recalling details of an offense- this should be taken cautiously because most violent offenders do not present with any documented medical proof of "blackouts" or "fragmented blackouts" other than claimed memory difficulty. Neurological exams should be performed to determine if an individual actually has neurological impairment or damage consistent with self-reported fragmented blackouts. Otherwise the perpetrator may get away with claiming memory problems when in fact they have no genuinely documented memory problems. Again, next-day cued memory recall is highly likely.

Alcohol use was more likely to increase aggressive behavior

in men who have lower levels of executive functioning and higher levels of irritability, or both (Giancola, 2002a; Giancola, 2004). Irritability refers to the propensity of an individual who when in a provocative situation, is highly likely to respond with negative cognitions and aggressive outbursts (e.g., Buss & Durkee, 1957; Godlaski & Giancola, 2009). Irritability appears to be a stable trait evident in childhood and adolescence (Caprara, Paciello, Gerbino, et al., 2007). Impaired executive functioning, alcohol intoxication, or both, when experienced with provocation, often lead to an increase in negative affect, specifically irritability, leading to an increase in aggression (Godlaski & Giancola, 2009). Experiencing anger itself does not significantly increase the likelihood of engaging in aggression but rather simply increases anger itself (Eckhardt, 2007). Irritability on the other hand has been shown to increase aggressive responses.

Alcohol acts as a disinhibitor in that alcohol impairs executive functioning. Executive functioning includes cognitive and emotional regulation (e.g., Easdon, Izenberg, Armilio, et al., 2005; MacDonald, Fong, Zanna, et al., 2000a). As negative affective states increase (e.g., frustration, anger, resentment, irritability), aggressive responses are more likely to occur. This is especially true if the individual experiencing the negative affective state results in the activation of aggression-related memories, emotions, and/or physiological responses (Berkowitz, 1993; Godlaski & Giancola, 2009). This focus on a negative emotion may decrease empathetic considerations and is more likely to enhance aggressive thinking (e.g., RMA's) and aggressive behavior. Extrapolating the above to a sexual offense situation, the above suggests that most of the offenders are able to recall offense specific details when provided with cues to assist in the memory recall. In addition, increasing positive expectations of recall, (e.g., perhaps helping others understand the alleged offense situation, or a plea bargain) may also assist with recall.

GENDER DIFFERENCES

Intoxication appears to increase the likelihood of aggression when irritability occurs. When an individual is focused on a particular stressor (alcohol myopia and attention to details of the situation at hand), and alcohol is consumed, the negative affect (irritability, agitation, hostility, frustration) is increased, compared to those who did not consume alcohol (Josephs & Steele, 1990; Steele & Josephs, 1988). This appears significantly more frequent in males who demonstrate a propensity for experiencing negative affect in response to stress (Verona & Kilmer, 2007; Verona, Reed, Curtin, et al., 2007). If attention is focused on a negative affective issue (e.g., stressful, fearful, frustrating), alcohol will likely increase this experience (specifically irritability) and therefore an increase in aggression is likely (Godlaski & Giancola, 2009). This is seen primarily with intoxicated males versus sober males. In addition this response is less likely with females (Quinn, Stappenbeck, & Fromme, 2013) unless the females had excessively high levels of propensity for physical aggression (Giancola, 2002c; Godlaski & Giancola, 2009).

Alcohol intoxication may play a much smaller role in female aggression than for males (Testa et al., 2012; Quinn, Stappenbeck, & Fromme, 2013). This may be a result of cultural expectations or females not needing to use alcohol intoxication as an excuse for aggression. Cultural, social, and gender role expectations may impact why males tend to demonstrate significantly higher rates of aggression when intoxicated than females, perhaps that society expects men to behave more aggressively or that society expects that alcohol makes men more aggressive (e.g., Eagly & Wood, 1991).

DISCUSSION

What the literature has to say is quite impressive. Violent offenders and specifically sexual offenders, even when intoxicated, are aware of what they are doing and can in fact recall their offense behavior when provided with cued-questioning. Several factors have been demonstrated to increase male aggression. Interestingly, none of the factors appear in any way to suggest that the men are out of control or that they are not aware of their aggressive behavior.

From an attributional theory stand point, we typically assign a dispositional attribution of a rape situation and attack the character of the rape victim when the perpetrator was known to her, when she was intoxicated, or when she initiated any of the sexual contact. This helps take responsibility away from the perpetrator and makes for more difficult prosecution. It may increase the confidence of the perpetrator because he may also ascribe to the same belief that the victim asked for or deserved to be raped (RMA beliefs) and in addition may bolster his confidence because he believes that others may justify his actions.

Having Rape Supporting Acceptance (RMA) beliefs makes it easier for males to engage in pressured sex or rape. These beliefs include any justification for perpetrators pressuring or forcing sexual contact and often blame the victim for engaging in specific behavior, such as trusting the perpetrator or for consuming alcohol, believing that somehow she must have wanted to be assaulted or raped.

Research has also demonstrated that real or perceived intoxication increased men's sexual arousal to violent and extreme pornography, and decreased men's empathetic response towards women in forced sex situations. In addition, believing that becoming intoxicated increases sexual arousal or that intoxication should result in sexual activity increases the likelihood of aggressive and risky sexual behavior. This appears to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Here it is referred to as alcohol expectancies.

Alcohol myopia theory suggests that an intoxicated individual would be less likely to be distracted by extraneous or interfering stimuli and that an intoxicated individual would pay attention only to the most salient situational cues. If this related to sexual contact, then the individual would focus primarily on sexual aspects of the situation. Those that paid attention to cues of consequences were less likely to engage in aggressive sexual behavior versus those who disregarded the possible negative consequences. Individuals with a predisposition for experiencing or expecting to experience negative cognitions or emotions (e.g., frustration, anger, isolation, rejection) are more likely to ignore negative consequences and focus on aggressively obtaining sexual contact. The stronger the men believed that alcohol would make them more aggressive (expectancies) the more they reported stronger sexual aggressive congruent emotions and motivation. However, this does not in any way cause a man to behave aggressively.

The role of pornography in sex offenses is clear. Repeated viewing of aggressive or extreme pornographic material eventually becomes pleasing and exciting for the perpetrator. Over time, the individual wants to try what they have seen and fantasized about in pornography and experience it first-hand. Masturbation and orgasm serve as a powerful reinforcement of the pornography images and themes and aggression and sex become more intertwined. Individuals that had strong sex related alcohol expectancies reported greater sexual arousal to violent pornography than those with weak sex-related alcohol expectancies.

There has been focus on date rape drugs and of course this is a serious problem. However, alcohol, not drugs appear to be involved in the majority of sex crimes. In addition, perpetrators often blame

their alcohol use for the sexual aggression despite being no evidence of a cause-effect relationship.

Alcohol intoxication results in impaired functioning in several cognitive areas. When intoxicated and experiencing a perceived inequity or negative cognition or negative emotion, the resulting negative emotions may be interpreted by an intoxicated individual as warranting an aggressive response. This impact of intoxication does not cause aggressive behavioral response, but rather impacts the decision making abilities of the intoxicated individual.

Further, the negative emotions or frustrated goals may become the focus of the current situation and the perpetrator believes that they are justified using aggression to gain sexual contact. Regardless, the degree to which an individual believes they are "intoxicated" (subjective intoxication) and the degree to which they *actually* are intoxicated (objective intoxication) may not matter in the decision making process of committing a violent crime. In either case, men are more likely to justify aggression when they believe that being intoxicated in some way justifies aggression. Research suggests that executive functioning decreases with alcohol. Alcohol intoxication appears to impact attentional control, allowing the individual to focus on a specific task and be able to effectively and accurately detect and react to changes in the current situational task. Applied to a rape situation, the intoxicated perpetrator focuses on the victim and on obtaining sexual contact, counters the victim's resistance to achieve the goal of forced sex.

Intoxicated individuals also demonstrated improved problem solving, demonstrating that alcohol intoxication facilitates creative problem solving. Therefore intoxicated individuals are more likely to seek out a quick response to the problem at hand. As negative affective states increase (e.g., frustration, anger, resentment, irritability), aggressive responses are more likely to occur. This focus on a negative emotion may decrease empathetic considerations and is more likely to enhance aggressive thinking (e.g., RMA's) and aggressive behavior. This may allow a sex offender, for example, to utilize creative thinking to counter victim resistance.

Alcohol intoxication may play a much smaller role in female aggression than for males. This may be due to cultural expectations of males to be more aggressive when intoxicated than females.

Lastly, offenders often claim that they are unable to recall offense specific details. It has been demonstrated that next-day cued recall was not impacted by alcohol use or intoxication except for those with demonstrated histories of fragmented memory impairment (not claimed impairment). This means that the majority of perpetrators can recall the offense details when motivated to do so.

In summary, there are many factors that influence a man's decision to engage in aggression or rape. All require choice, that is, the man's decision to engage in the chosen behavior, regardless of intoxication. Regardless of how intoxicated the man was at the time of an aggressive act or rape, he should be able to remember the incident.

Utilizing the above information would be helpful for forensic examiners and treatment personnel to provide a more in depth understanding of the offender's motives, issues, and risk factors. To simply have an offender cease drinking or drug use may not adequately address personality issues and concerns (e.g., RMA's, attributional styles). For law enforcement, understanding the role of alcohol plays in sex and violent offenses helps to structure interviews of victims as well as interviews and interrogations of the offender. To understand and think like an offender gives a new direction for investigative strategies. For prosecutors, the information helps to direct consequences that address the offender's underlying

personality and thinking style, which may result in more appropriate sentences. In essence, the data support the conclusion that offenders, whether intoxicated or sober, made a conscious, deliberate decision to engage in their violent behavior. This understanding can benefit and inform the approaches of both prosecution as well as treatment and rehabilitation of offenders.

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