

## ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE AND PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL CHANGES IN DEPENDENT PEOPLE. CASE STUDY

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### **Abstract**

In contemporary society identifies increasingly more people dependent on alcohol. The causes are various, start with the «culture» of alcohol in family and community consumption in poor backgrounds, to excess consumption at difficult moments in live. With the onset of alcoholism are identified consequences at individual, family and community level. Most suffering alcoholic family members, who are directly involved throughout the consumption as codependency, in all the stages through which it, being affected by psycho-emotional and behavioral reactions of alcoholic person. This article highlights behavioral and psycho-emotional reactions which occurs most often in a «dual» mode, shocking by its side family members, friends and acquaintances in the community. The alcoholic resort to various tricks to achieve the purposes of consumption, which may directly or indirectly affect those close. Thus, to better highlight these issues will bring attention to a case of a young man of 26 year, which, in a certain period of time, harmed both self and family and other close persons.

**Keywords:** addiction, alcoholism, behavioral reactions, psycho-emotional reactions, damage

### **Résumé**

Dans la société contemporaine, il y a de plus en plus de personnes dépendantes d'alcool. Les causes peuvent être très diverses: en commençant avec la «culture» de la consommation d'alcool au sein de sa famille ou de sa communauté, la consommation liée à son entourage ou la consommation excessive, comme refuge, relative à certains moments difficiles de sa vie. Avec l'installation d'alcoolisme, des conséquences individuelles, sur la cellule familiale et sur sa communauté sont identifiées. La plupart des membres de la famille alcoolique subissent les conséquences. Tout au long de la consommation, les membres de la famille sont directement impliqués en tant que co-dépendants en vivant toutes les étapes à travers lesquelles la personne dépendante passe, et étant affectés par les réactions comportementales et psycho-émotionnelles de la personne alcoolique. L'objectif de cet article est de mettre en évidence les réactions comportementales et psycho-

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émotionnelles qui se manifestent souvent de manière «double», impactant durablement les membres de la famille, les amis et les connaissances. La personne alcoolique utilise différents „stratagèmes” pour atteindre leur objectif de consommation, qui peut affecter directement ou indirectement les personnes proches. Ainsi, afin de mettre en valeur ces aspects, je vous propose l’histoire de vie d’un jeune de 26 ans, qui, sur une certaine période, a fortement impacté autant sa propre famille que d’autres personnes proches.

**Mots clés:** dépendance, alcool, alcoolisme, réactions comportementales, réactions psycho-émotionnelles, dualité, préjugés

### **Rezumat**

În societatea contemporană se identifică din ce în ce mai multe persoane dependente de alcool. Cauzele sunt diverse, pornind de la «cultura» consumului de alcool în familie și comunitate, consumul în anturaje necorespunzătoare până la consumul în exces la momente dificile din viață. Odată cu instalarea alcoolismului, sunt identificate consecințe la nivel individual, familial și la nivel de comunitate. Cel mai mult suferă membrii familiei alcoolicii, care în toată perioada consumului sunt implicați direct ca și codependenți, în toate etapele prin care trece acesta, fiind afectați de reacțiile comportamentale și psiho-emoționale ale persoanei alcoolice. Scopul acestui articol este de a evidenția reacțiile comportamentale și psiho-emoționale care se manifestă de cele mai multe ori într-un mod «dual», șocând prin reacțiile acestuia membrii familiei, prietenii și cunoscuții din comunitate. Alcoolicul apelează la diferite tertipuri pentru a-și atinge scopul consumului, ceea ce poate afecta în mod direct sau indirect pe cei apropiați. Astfel, pentru a evidenția și mai bine aceste aspecte, voi aduce în atenție un caz a unui tânăr de 26 ani, care, într-o anumită perioadă de timp, a adus prejudicii atât propriei persoane, cât și familiei și altor persoane apropiate.

**Cuvinte cheie:** dependență, alcool, alcoolism, reacții comportamentale, reacții psiho-emoționale, dualitate, prejudicii

## **1. Introduction**

Social reality around us presents us with a worrying drama: alcohol consumption has greatly increased over the recent years in terms of volume and frequency, whereby the age at which excessive alcohol drinking starts has decreased. Alcohol consumption is a continuous and slow intoxication, which results in: hand tremors, anemia, nightmares, insomnia, deception of the senses, memory weakening, nervous agitation, impairment of moral sense, indifference to self, to posture and profession, indifference to family, education, responsibilities, conjugal fidelity, irascibility, laziness, higher risk of accidents etc. In large amounts, alcohol compromises the immune capacity of the body, health risks are higher in case of disease and mortality among people with alcohol-related problems follows an increasing trend.

Alcoholism is considered a family disease. This is because the person who consumes and is addicted to alcohol is first affected, followed by the marriage partner - husband or wife, and last but not least, the children in that family, who

are affected equally or perhaps to a greater extent. Children born from alcohol-consuming parents have even from birth a weakened body, prone to illness. Alcohol inhibits creativity, hinders association of ideas, disturbs understanding, abducts the power of will and responsibility. The saddest consequence of alcohol consumption is that it influences the character of all people who reach the stage of addiction. Abusive alcohol consumption leads to domestic violence, which in some families degenerates into particularly severe situations

Alcohol involves fairly significant financial costs, and this can cause a financial crisis within the family. The likely consequences of such crises are quarrels between spouses, parents and children, which often escalate to domestic violence on the marriage partner and children. An alcoholic loses control and reason, which in most cases degenerates into violence. This may explain the increased number of divorces and criminal offenses.

All these issues are approached in the present paper, starting from the clarification of the concept of addiction, analysis of behavioral and psycho-emotional reactions of alcohol consumers, the concept of codependency and the relationship between codependents and alcohol consumers and, last but not least, a case study in which behavioral and psycho-emotional duality is analysed in a 26-year-old alcohol addict.

## **2. Alcohol addiction. Types and manifestations**

According to the definition provided by the World Health Organization, “excessive use of drugs in a continued or sporadic manner, which is incompatible or unrelated to medical practice, is considered consumption or abuse” (WHO, [www.euro.who.int/en](http://www.euro.who.int/en)). Addiction is a form of voluntary, abusive, periodic or chronic consumption of addictive substances, harmful both to the individual and the society and not based on medical reasons, unlike the classical, legitimate pharmacological addictions that are by origin therapeutic or paramedical. From a pharmacological point of view, as defined by the World Health Organization, by addiction we understand “the mental or physical state resulting from the interaction between an organism and a drug, characterized by behavioral changes and other reactions, always accompanied by the need to take the substance continuously or periodically in order to experience its psychic effects and sometimes to avoid suffering” (WHO).

The most widespread drug addiction, a true global social scourge encountered everywhere except for Muslim countries, regarded by the WHO as the fourth public health problem, alcoholism is a pandemic that threatens physical and mental health. There is no unanimously accepted definition of alcoholism, however, this category includes people who repeatedly, abusively and successively consume alcohol, becoming addicted to it and, as a result, experience psychosomatic changes over time that disrupt individual relationships with the social environment. Alcoholism is the complex, individual and / or social phenomenon of the large group of drug addictions, now considered the fourth world public health problem.

Alcoholism can be defined as a habit of consuming alcohol more and more often than the body tolerates, causing a habit and an irresistible desire to repeat the intake. Some authors proposed that alcoholism should be defined by three factors: psychological and physical deterioration, performing anti-social acts and excessive drinking. As defined by the World Health Organization, “alcoholics are excessive drinkers whose addiction to alcohol occurs when they show either a traceable mental disorder or manifestation which affects their physical or mental health, relationships with others and their social and economic behavior” (WHO, [www.euro.who.int/en](http://www.euro.who.int/en)).

Alcoholism is a chronic and progressive disease characterized by control loss over alcohol consumption, which results in social, physical and psychological problems for both the addicted person and his closed ones. Alcohol addiction is the urgent need to ingest alcoholic beverages. A characteristic specific to alcohol is that it causes addiction after three days of chronic administration. “The phenomenon refers to two aspects: psychic addiction (unrestrained psychic impulse to continue drinking, because relaxation occurs while under the influence of alcohol) and physical addiction (evolving in parallel with the development of tolerance and highlighted by the abstinence syndrome)” (Neamțu & Stan, 2005, p. 405). Young adults (especially males) show the highest risk of death due to excessive alcohol consumption. “Adolescent brains are particularly susceptible to drinking, and the more the onset of alcohol consumption is belated, the less likely it is that as adults they experience alcohol addiction problems” (Norberg, Bierut & Grucza, 2009, p. 79).

Erich Goode (as cited in Rădulescu, 2006, p. 47) considers that there are generally four defining criteria for alcoholism:

- the amount and frequency of alcohol consumed. Alcoholics drink large amounts of alcohol in a certain period of time;
- psychological dependence; it refers to the fact that a person can be defined as alcoholic provided that he “requires” alcohol from a psychological point of view; the person cannot function without consuming alcohol and experiences sensations of discomfort and anxiety if deprived of alcohol;
- physical dependence; an individual is alcoholic if interruption of alcohol consumption triggers symptoms of abstinence;
- defining life issues. Alcoholics generally face serious life problems, such as divorce, unemployment, risk of being arrested, risk of producing and suffering accidents.

“Over the recent years, a wealth of specialized literature and numerous medical meetings have increasingly addressed the social and psychological problems of alcohol abuse, all the more so because under the influence of alcohol crimes and acts of extreme violence are committed” (Beliș, 1981, p. 23).

Approaching alcoholism from a development perspective shows that the clinical types of this disease correspond to different levels of development. This conclusion applies to both the clinical types proposed by Knight and the more

recent clinical types proposed by Morey Jellinek E.M., an American researcher at Yale University (as cited in Boișteanu, 1995, p. 23) distinguishes four important stages in the development of alcoholism:

*The pre-alcoholic, symptomatic stage:* In this first phase of the «disease» evolution, no one can observe, (not even the future addict himself) something that distinguishes between alcohol consumption and the behavior of healthy people. At first, the alcoholic drinks only to reach that degree of relaxed satisfaction, courage, stimulation or oblivion, which improves his mood and drives away fear, inhibition, or even lack of initiative. At this point, there are still no signs of social or family decline, which is why this stage is referred to as the „conceited debut” of alcoholic addiction.

*The prodromal stage:* at the beginning of this phase there is a clue that allows recognition of the effects already produced in the nervous system; in a completely unexpected way, the alcohol consumer confronts himself with memory gaps, the so-called amnesia.

*The critical stage:* it is signaled by “losing control of drinking”; large amounts of alcohol are consumed, and reasoning is developed to justify this behavior towards alcohol consumption and resist the social pressure exerted in connection with this behavior. There is a change in interpersonal relationships, with the tendency of alcohol consumers to isolate themselves or escape from the family environment, change friends, neglect job and proper eating, the first hospitalization but also the refuse of treatment, alcohol drinking in the morning.

*Chronic stage:* is the result of “prolonged drinking” and a gradual diminishment of intellectual functions is observed; the obsessive need for the ingestion of new amounts of alcohol appears, a sense of “religiosity for alcohol” is established, at which time any rational thinking system diminishes or even disappears. The characteristics refer to the decrease in alcohol tolerance, tremors, psychomotor inhibition, alcohol psychosis, etc. The chronic stage is divided into two categories: the first is *simple alcoholism* where a limited ability to abstain is retained, and the second category, the *addictive alcoholism*, when the alcoholic uses additional substances, sometimes for substitution, as a drug.

### **3. Behavioral and psycho-emotional reactions in alcohol consumers**

Alcohol abuse occurs when the person in question has lost control of drinking, which is reflected in the occurrence of family and professional problems, as well as difficulties in fulfilling social roles. The history, symptoms and signs associated with alcoholism are largely those defining physical addiction to any substance with sedative effect: character disorders, decrease in concentration and attention, fatigue, tremor, insomnia, digestive disorders, muscle spasms. All these disturbances may affect to some extent social, economic, family and interpersonal relationships.

“An alcoholic is a person who consistently fails to choose whether to drink or not, and who, if he drinks, is incapable of deciding whether to stop or not. Alcoholics with complications are those people who, due to excessive and prolonged alcohol consumption, have physical or mental disorders” (Frantz, 2009, p. 4).

In order to better understand the behavioral and psycho-emotional reactions in alcohol-consuming people, it is important to clarify the determinants of excessive drinking. From the multitude of attempts to relationally group the factors seen as determinants of chronic alcoholism, certain initial factors can be analyzed, which were previously highlighted by many other studies, and to which we can refer as predisposing factors, susceptible to favor alcoholism. These can be grouped into: heredity factors; personality factors; occasional factors; socio-cultural and economic factors.

Recent research has attempted to address the issue of genetic alcoholism. Some studies (<https://www.drugabuse.gov>) suggest that there is a *genetic factor* that predisposes to alcoholism, however, this should not lead to an underestimation of the role played by the environment. As an example, descendants living in the same conditions as their parents learn a pattern of life and reproduce a number of similar living conditions. In other words, “the importance of the heredity factor is amplified by the existence of the child alongside the affected parental model” (Neamțu & Stan, 2005, p. 405).

Regarding the *personality factors* category, numerous studies sought to establish a link between personality type and predisposition to alcoholism. “After several studies were conducted, it was found that alcoholism appeared in individuals with both normal personality and personality disorders” (Neamțu & Stan, 2005, pp. 405-406).

*Occasional factors* are also important, because repeated consumption under the influence of certain environmental factors and conditions can lead in time to regular drinking and alcohol addiction. According to Van Dijk, the evolution of the drinker from his first contact with alcohol to the addiction phase comprises 5 stages: “1) first contact with alcohol; 2) the occasional drinking stage; 3) the social-moderate integrated drinking stage; 4) the excessive drinking stage in which the subject consumes an amount of alcohol that exceeds his resistance, including health status and the habits of the social group to which the drinker belongs; 5) the addiction stage, with the loss of freedom to drink moderately (Fauquet), with loss of control (Jellinek) manifested by the inability to stop drinking after the first glass of alcohol” (as cited in Boișteanu, 1995, p. 127).

*Socio-economic and cultural factors* refer to the role of alcohol in different cultural contexts. These factors have a specific role: socio-economic development, as well as formal education and culture are closely related to the degree of social acceptance of alcohol consumption. The official rules (legislation governing the production and distribution of alcoholic beverages) and traditions, habits, customs, i.e., information norms within a society, determine the level of alcohol

use and influence the types, manner and frequency of such use, which can either lead to a higher drinking rate, or put an end to alcohol addiction.

Thus, we can say that there are a variety of factors determining alcohol consumption. A diagnosis of «alcoholism» reveals nothing about the type, cause and degree of this kind of behavior: “all the conditions of the alcohol addict must be analyzed and identified and only then a correlation with the possibilities of intervention can be made” (Neamțu & Stan, 2005, p. 407).

With regard to behavioral changes occurring in an alcohol-addicted person, we may refer to aggressivity which occurs very often as a result of drinking. Aggressivity is the particular state of an individual that is characterized by an acute or chronic tension which can only be satisfied through a violent reaction towards the victim. Aggressivity takes various forms, does not always imply an antisocial, criminal behavior and does not necessarily have to be assimilated to a mental deviation or always considered a result of alcohol consumption.

“90% of the individuals with aggressive behavior caused by alcoholism are males, primarily belonging to the 25-45 years age group i.e., about 58.6%, followed by the 18 - 25 years age group, which amounts to approximately 29%” (National Institute on Alcohol, <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov>). Based on these data, we can argue that alcoholism is a major social danger through its potential for aggression, particularly during the chronic stage of addiction. Regardless of the mental structure of each individual, alcohol is recognized as a triggering factor of auto and hetero-destructive behavior, of impulsive reactions, or as a disinhibitor of potentially aggressive tendencies. “Alcohol, the cause of violent acts, increases their likelihood of occurrence if consumed by an aggressive individual” (Beleş, 1981, p. 72).

Alcohol remains known as the toxin that is associated to and even bursts into violent and aggressive behavior at the same time, in the sense of either heterodestruction or self-destruction. There is a complex relationship between antisocial deviant behavior and alcoholism, given by the fact that alcohol is considered in many cases the trigger of violent and impulsive reactions, but also a selective disinhibitor of aggressive instincts.

#### **4. Codependents and their relationship with the alcohol consumer**

Family structure plays an important role in the alcoholism issue. Some studies (Luna națională a informării despre efectele consumului de alcool. Analiză de situație, 2019) show that in disorganized families, in most cases one of the spouses or even both have certain inclinations towards excessive drinking. Studies conducted in families where one of the spouses has alcohol-related problems have shown that the nature of the relationships between the spouses changes during marriage. That is, new interactions are established by the spouses so that they can cope with the addiction within the family. We can speak in these cases of codependency.

By codependency or codependent behavior we should not understand that the life partner of the person addicted to alcohol is in the same situation. Instead,

this behavior refers to the addict's life-partner reactions seen as a way to avoid the consequences of alcohol consumption being reflected on himself and on the entire family. In short, codependency consists of ideas, feelings, attitudes and behavior experienced by the life partner, and which unconsciously and involuntarily encourage alcohol consumption in the addicted person. "Most of the affected couples where alcoholism is a cause of disharmony are characterized by misbehavior developments with the exacerbation of the egophilic traits, including those characterized by the tendency to impose omnipotent control of a spouse on the other" (Boișteanu, 1995, p. 140). Alcoholism interferes with family life and also affects stable marriages or adoption relationships, "affecting cohabitation and communication in relationships that are modulated by the role of family members and by which the subjective informational bond is normally accomplished" (Boișteanu, 1995, p. 141).

In a family where alcoholism is frequently present, as a rule, the financial status also decreases to the detriment of the spouse and the entire family. A satisfactory marriage in these circumstances is virtually impossible, and the degradation of the family situation deepens the feelings of anger and negation in the addict, giving him new reasons for concern.

A much-discussed and often controversial issue concerns the life partners of alcoholics. Many women with alcoholic husbands tend to exhibit a hypochondriac personality which can make them dependent on the addicted husbands; as a result, when the husband improves his life to some extent, the wife can crash. When the wife consumes alcohol, a negative and strongly emotional social reaction can occur, emerging from the idea that an alcohol-consuming woman is unable to take care of her children properly and cannot fulfill her role in the family. "The alcoholic woman is viewed infinitely less indulgently than the alcoholic man, which makes women drink alone, secretly, sometimes with their husbands, trying to mask this vice as much as possible" (Beliș, 1981, p. 76).

In society the woman plays the role of a wife and mother. Given that some behaviors and abuses (such as alcoholism) can diminish her ability to perform these roles, she can be more severely sanctioned by society than in the case where the addict is the husband. All these social sanctions are intended, in the view of those applying them, to judge such behavior, based on the idea that «it is worse to have a drinking mother than an alcoholic father ». This is because in the absence of the mother the children can suffer irreparable harm, as lack of affection may cause "durable reactions of rejection in children, followed by the fear of abandonment and ultimately by a permanent isolation from their parents" (Boișteanu, 1995, p. 142).

Some families confronted with such problems may experience jealousy, because alcohol can lead to an increased libido, but not to an equally increased sexual potency. Although the role of heredity in acquiring drinking habits is presently not clear, one can still speak of family alcoholism. In most cases, psychological and family-related factors are the most important in motivating the



commencement of alcohol abuse: misunderstandings between spouses, acts of psychological and physical violence and aggression, persistent feelings of guilt, abandonment of the marital residence either out of free will or forced, divorce, professional failure, etc.

In most cases, alcohol is used as a means of overcoming inhibitions and anxious states, which can lead to aggressive behavior and within-family violence. Alcohol is almost ubiquitous in conflicts between family members, however, when both parents have alcohol-related problems, tensions are generated by other issues such as child education, financial or sexual issues, etc. The conflict between alcoholic parents plays a very important role in children's development. Children attempt to copy the behavior of the aggressive parent, and learn aggressiveness as a solution to problem solving or to control the feelings of frustration or hostility. Some children who are part of an alcohol-consuming family can develop feelings of frustration caused by the inability to resist to aggressive parents or the inability to protect a parent against the violence of the other.

## **5. Methods used**

To highlight the dual and unnatural behavior resulting from excessive alcohol consumption, we performed a case study on a young man aged 26, addicted to alcohol and who harmed both himself and his family and close friends. The interview method applied to both the young person and some family members was used to collect information. The young man had a recalcitrant attitude at first, but during the interview he changed his attitude and provided the requested information. The interview was also applied to family members (parents, a cousin) who cooperated and provided relevant information.

Data on the subject under investigation: name, first name - D.S.; home: City of Falticeni, Jud. Suceava; studies: 12 classes; marital status: unmarried; professional state: changed several jobs in areas such as construction, protection and security, sales, etc.

We chose to present a case study as it is a method that "enables researchers to extract features of real-life events" (Yin, 2005, p.18). For this case study, the following a set of questions:

### *5.1. Study questions:*

- 1) What changes can occur as a result of alcohol consumption and dependence on the young person's behaviour and psycho-emotional state?
- 2) How can family members and people close to the young person's alcohol addiction be affected?
- 3) How can psycho-social and medical intervention be interfered with the young person's alcohol dependence?
- 4) How does the young man perceive his situation of dependence and the harm done in relation to those close to him?

*5.2. Interview guide with the 26-year-old:*

1. What can you say about your alcohol consumption?
2. Do you consider yourself a person addicted to alcohol?
3. If so, when did you realize that you are addicted to alcohol?
4. How has your behavior changed in the context of alcohol use?
5. What emotional states and reactions did you experience with alcohol use?
6. How did excessive drinking influence your character and personality?
7. What difficulties have you encountered during alcohol consumption?
8. How did family members react to your drinking habits?
9. What tightropes have you experienced as a result of alcohol consumption?
10. How did alcohol addiction affect your personal and professional life?

**6. Case study: “Behavioral and psycho-emotional duality in a 26-year-old man”**

A 26-year-old man reached psycho-emotional and behavioral degradation due to a 6-year excessive alcohol consumption, which affected him, but also his family and close friends. Among the characteristics of alcohol consumption, the following have been identified in this particular case: he consumes more alcohol than originally intended; he tries to reduce or stop drinking, but fails; he found himself in various dangerous situations during or after having consumed alcohol; he had to increase the amount of alcohol ingested to obtain the same effect previously obtained with a smaller amount; he spent much time drinking alcohol; he continued to drink even if this caused problems with family or friends; he noticed that excessive drinking interferes with the job, studies and personal life; he gave up activities that were interesting or important to him in favor of alcohol consumption; he had legal problems; he noticed that alcohol consumption had adverse effects on physical and mental health.

Although in secondary and high school the subject showed he was a talented young man with many dreams to fulfill, the disappointment of a failed relationship led him to start drinking within a group of friends with similar habits. The family was extremely affected, and the parents paid various damages and debts on behalf of their son; after they were no longer able to support him, he started selling goods from the house, made dubious transactions, borrowed money from acquaintances and friends he never returned, gambled, lost his job, started stealing, became violent with the others, etc.

The analysis of this case was performed starting from the study questions that formed the basis of the analysis units. “An individual represents the studied case and the primary unit of analysis” (Yin, 2005, p. 41).

*1). Alcohol addiction in the 26-year-old:*

The young man realized he was addicted to alcohol when he could not live without drinking. He felt alone, deserted by the loved ones and covered in problems and debts he could not deal with. The more disappointment and despair

assaulted him, the higher the amount of alcohol he ingested. He soon realized that he could not start a regular day without consuming at least 100 grams of alcohol.

“I felt that I was of no use in this world. All my friends were rejecting me, my family always reproached me that I was a shame for them and only brought them troubles. The only friends I thought I had were the people who shared my drinking habits.” (D.S., 26 years old)

“When I woke up in the morning, the first thought that came to my mind was to get 100 g of cognac. Otherwise I could not resist for the day. I felt a state of melancholy combined with pain and chills. And from 100 g I got to 400 g and even more. Only then did I realize that something was wrong with me.” (D.S., 26 years old)

*2). Evolution of behavioral reactions and psycho-emotional states as a result of alcohol consumption. Changes in character and personality*

The evolution of behavioral reactions and psycho-emotional states followed a downward trend. Initially, until the start of alcohol use, the young man was an educated, well-intended, respectful person with a pleasant and pacifist attitude. He subsequently became a negligent person, with a violent behavior and language, always in conflicting situations which generally degenerated into fights. He used to harm himself by hitting the walls with his fists, cutting himself with the blade, having his skin tattooed with frightening images, he showed suicidal behavior, he used to cry and tear his clothes. After a while he got a girlfriend who was puzzled by his dual behavior. On the one hand, when lucid he was a peaceful, pacifist, humorous person who promised a lot, and once he began drinking, he became a totally changed, manipulative, violent person, using various lies and tricks to get goods from the family, acquaintances and friends. Once he started drinking, he continued with gambling and ended up in losing all his money. Every time he promised her that this situation would not repeat itself and that he would become a better person.

“Once I started drinking, I was no longer able to control myself. My mom, my dad, my girlfriend, the other friends no longer mattered to me, alcohol was taking control of me. I was violent, I wanted to beat someone all the time, I was hurting myself, manipulating people around to have money for buying alcohol, and when I woke up and realized what I did, I was ashamed of my behavior. And although I wanted to change, to have a nice relationship with my girlfriend, to become again the son my parents used to have, I realized I was not able to do that. I felt like trapped in a cave.” (D.S., 26 years old)

“Oh Lord, I do not know what to say about my child. I educated him properly, he was such a good kid, he used to help me with housework, had a job and earned his own money, he was singing in a band at the time, he was respectful, hard-working and honest. Now I no longer recognize him. It is like he hates us when we tell him to stop drinking. He slams and breaks everything in the house, has stolen money and goods from home, fought with many of his friends, has debts everywhere. He

made us only trouble, we no longer know what to expect from him anymore.” (D.M., 54 years old, D.S.’s mother)

“He’s a completely different person, and I do not recognize him anymore. Alcohol is taking his mind, as if he was not my boy. It hurts my soul to say this, but it would be better that he did not exist than to continue with these habits and destroy both himself and us.” (D.I., 57 years old, D.S.’s father)

### *3). Difficulties occurred in personal and professional life as a result of alcohol consumption*

The difficulties faced by the young man began to emerge with drinking. Such episodes repeated over time during alcohol binges, which in time led to the installation of addiction. During all this time, the young man gave up his plans for the future, rejected his true friends and accepted friends with similar drinking habits, reasoning that “only they truly understand and support me”. He lost his first job and did not managed to keep any of the other jobs he tried afterwards, harmed the family and his new girlfriend who still hoped that he become again a man of integrity, as well as the acquaintances who helped him thinking he would recover and pay his debts. Finally, the family refused to help him anymore, and the girlfriend wanted to break up with him. Friends from the time he did not consume alcohol went away, whereas his drinking buddies always dragged him in the vicious circle of alcoholism.

“At one point I felt that I had lost everything; my own family did not want to hear from me anymore, my girlfriend did not want to live with a drunkard like myself anymore, I had no money, no home, no job. I lived for a while at one of my drinking buddies, but he kept telling me that he owed money for utilities and that I could not stay with him any longer.” (D.S., 26 years old)

“He lost himself. He was no longer the person we knew: he no longer had character, he was no longer a man of his word, he was a liar, a manipulator, he victimized himself all the time, he was violent and at some point, he got very ill. The family told him to go to the hospital, to do something, but he was in a continuous state of degradation. Drinking turned him into another man, a non-man.” (D.C., 32 years old, cousin of D.S.)

### *4). Intervention in the case of alcohol addiction*

The young addict said that he had reached such a physical and mental decline that he asked for help from his family, close acquaintances and relatives, and from his girlfriend who was about to break up with him. At that time, his relatives took him to a doctor where he was recommended psychiatric treatment and included in a program within the Anonymous Alcoholics group. Although his condition has improved, the young man is aware of his addiction and of the possibility of relapse which may occur at any time. He wants to improve his life quality, but the struggle is too strong, and he realizes that it is important to follow a much more rigorous program than he has followed so far. It is important that the family and the closed ones support him in such moments.

“You come at a time when you feel like you sink like in a swamp. You want to get out of there, but without success. In such moments, I realized that the family and true friends which I had rejected in the moments of crisis, are those who can help me. And I asked for help. Without them I would not be here anymore.” (D.S., 26 years old)

“I cannot fix all the bad things I have done. Once you become addicted to alcohol, you reach a point where you no longer care what is happening around you. The only desire is to drink, to drink and not to wake up...” (D.S., 26 years old)

“You cannot recover if you are not supported by the family and specialists. This addiction is like a spark that can fire in a second. You never get cured, that’s why it is so important to give up drinking forever. In the Anonymous Alcoholics group, I understood something about addiction and relapse, which can be summarized in a phrase: a drink is too much and 100 drinks too little.” (D.S., 26 years old)

Young D.S. followed the Anonymous Alcoholics Group program for a certain period of time and struggled with his own addiction. However, the changes occurred as a result of addiction have marked his character, personality and sensitivity and a possible relapse is always a dilemma for both himself and those who have supported him.

## 7. Conclusions

*In conclusion*, alcoholism is a disease that affects the physical and mental health of any individual who has reached such a degree of addiction. It develops over time and leads to behavioral and psycho-emotional changes. From the described case, it was observed that the onset of excessive alcohol use coincided with the destruction of relations with family members and close relatives, with the onset of medical, professional, economic, or other problems. “Most of the alcohol-related problems - crime, violence, accidents, partner abuse, illness, etc., are related rather to excessive (abnormal) drinking than to moderate (normal) drinking” (*Social and Cultural Aspects of Drinking, Key Findings*, Social Issues Research Centre Oxford, U.K., 2002, as cited in Rădulescu & Dâmboeanu, 2006, p. 436).

Family environment and the socio-professional group play a key role in the assistance provided to alcohol addicts. The specialized literature recommends maintaining the family and socio-professional insertion, and regarding the phenomenon of alcoholism, implementation of preventive measures. A measure designed to reduce the consumption of alcoholic beverages consists in alerting the population and especially young people to the negative consequences of alcoholism. This process can be carried out through schools, radio and television broadcasts, as well as publications accessible to any individual. Another measure would be economic development that would improve lifestyle, thereby reducing the consumption of alcoholic beverages, particularly among people who use alcohol as a remedy for poor living conditions.

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