

Alcoholism and Genetics

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There has been much literature and talk about a theory that proposes the possibility of a genetic predisposition to becoming an alcoholic. Several studies seem to indicate that the offspring of alcoholics tend to become alcoholics. There does seem to be an association *prima facie*¹, but no tangible proof has been found for an "alcoholism gene" – something in the DNA, which predisposes a person to becoming an alcoholic. Being a logical and rational person the idea itself to me is postposterous in the extreme.

First of all, Darwin's Theory, or the "*Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection*"², has never been proven³. The underlying premise – natural selection, does seem to make sense to the ill-informed. "Selection" supposedly favors those individuals whose physical or behavioral traits make them highest in the pecking order for mating, and thereby they pass along their genes. Alcohol certainly breaks down inhibitions, and under that premise alone, could any mating "superiority" be claimed; it would be difficult if not impossible to prove.

Other than the fact that alcohol tends to remove the natural inhibitions to have "casual sex", there is no data that could possibly be collected that would conclusively prove that alcoholism is a genetically-inherited disease. There is simply no means by which such a study could be controlled. The DNA of everyone who is an alcoholic would have to be compared to the DNA of a significant number (equal to the number in the "alcoholics" group) of people who are not alcoholics to see if a particular genetic coding is common in alcoholics. Peradventure⁴ a "common" DNA sequence is found, we may be looking at common DNA damage caused by alcohol abuse.

In order to claim that a certain gene "codes for alcoholism", we would have to read DNA code, and know what each base-pair sequence means. Sorry, only the DESIGNER⁵ has the "source code", and He ain't giving it up. Save yourselves the trouble, boys! Look for those government research grants elsewhere. Alcoholism genes in DNA? - I don't think so!

Picking up a drink is a BEHAVIOR that usually starts in a social setting, or under peer pressure. Alcohol is highly addictive; it slowly, after prolonged use, it becomes part of the body's "chemistry", as does nicotine. That is an empirical fact that's been clinically proven. "Hangovers" are withdrawal symptoms, and there is such a thing as "drinking yourself sober"... you sure as hell won't pass a Breathalyzer™ test, though. If you've reached that point, you most definitely have a very serious problem. Alcohol addiction is just as serious as addiction to any other drug. Sudden withdrawal from a serious drinking habit can kill you as suddenly as a .357 magnum discharged into the brainpan⁶.

After the physical symptoms of alcohol withdrawal subside, the craving for a drink is simply comfort-seeking behavior. It is driven engramically⁷. The solution to the craving is not "will-power"; you will lose that battle, trust me!

¹ *Prima Facie* (Latin) - "on its face".

² The full title of Darwin's book.

³ There is a \$250,000 reward offered by Kent Hovind for scientific proof of "evolution". See:

www.drdino.com

⁴ Peradventure - "perhaps"; "if".

⁵ The "designer" is God. Obviously, DNA is a product of design; there is no possible way that even a simple protein could "assemble" itself by accident. - see my book: "*The Book of NeoGenesis*" on my online bookstore at: <http://www.LuLu.com/Net4TruthUSA> or go to <http://www.lulu.com/content/89015>

⁶ Brainpan - inside the skull.

⁷ Engramically - by force or compulsion of subconscious programming, driven by the natural instinct to "survive".

Alcohol is part of the coping mechanism by which one deals with underlying trauma, stress, guilt, or other unresolved spiritual issues. I should know; I used marihuana to deal with stress, loneliness, fear, and a litany of other emotions when I was in Vietnam. Pot was a substitute for coping skills - and being "high" kept the pain away. It didn't solve the problems, but it kept me from hurting inside.

Thank God, that by the grace of God, I haven't touched the stuff in over 33 years, neither do I ever even think about lighting up. Pot is no different from alcohol in that regard. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't just walk away from a drug addiction; if they do, they're lying to you, or they simply don't know any better.

It is possible that a common factor may be found for alcoholism, but I doubt very seriously that a genetically coded predilection to consume alcohol will ever be found. If a DNA sequence common to alcoholics is found, there should also exist a similar genetic anomaly for drugs, or otherwise one must logically ask the question, "*What makes alcohol so special?*" If any DNA link is found, it is more likely that DNA damage is done by the consumption of alcohol, but the consumption is a learned behavior that is inherited by example. The "common gene" one is likely to find in these cases, is not a gene that *creates* the propensity to drink, but the gene that is most likely to be damaged by the drinking.

Further arguments could be made against the theory that alcoholism is genetically inherited, by simply examining the (postulated) process of "natural selection", and viewing it in context with the notion that selection is based on "survival of the fittest", and on traits which enable the individual to survive better than his peers. There are points pro and con that one could make here, but the argument is moot until some solid (physical, empirical) evidence comes to the fore.

I believe that classifying alcoholism, or any other form of drug addiction as a "disease", is a mistake on several counts. I believe that the connotation the word "disease" carries, removes the focus from the real issue. Alcoholism or drug addiction is most certainly not a disease one can contract by breathing germs, sitting on a filthy toilet seat, or being born of the wrong parents⁸. These addictions are AcQuired Disabilities (AQDs), or AcQuired Dysfunctions. If there were no alcohol or drugs available, one could then, not acquire the disease. This leaves the question about where this "disease" originates.

Does alcoholism originate in a DNA sequence that causes one to seek alcohol as part of a need to satisfy peculiar body chemistry? Does a (supposed) genetic predisposition to alcohol mean that a person with this (yet undiscovered) trait has a flaw in his/her body chemistry that causes addiction upon use, whereas someone without this flaw in their genetic makeup would not become addicted as readily, or is immune to addiction? Is the disease the alcohol itself, or is the disease really a symptom of some other dysfunction? I tend to favor the latter, and the reason I do, comes from simple logic.

I have attended AA meetings and substance abuse classes, and I have not abused drugs or alcohol since 1971. Please don't get the wrong message here – it is not because of the classes that I stopped using marihuana and Thai Stick. I stopped by the grace of God, over 20 years before I went to any classes; and the only reason I went to the AA and NA meetings was to support a friend who asked me to accompany him (the free coffee and donuts weren't bad, either).

⁸ Well, with the possible exception that your parents are alcoholics and you grew up learning by observing their behavior when they were under stress or trauma.

I never was an alcoholic, and drinking a beer today would make me physically ill for a week. I couldn't finish one unless it was very cold, I was very thirsty, and there was nothing else to drink.

If one believes he has a disease, and that disease has no cure, then that person is doomed to a life of recovery. He is told outright, that his addiction cannot be cured, and the rest of his life must be spent in a conscious effort every waking moment, to resist the craving and the temptation to pick up that drink, or crack stem. This strategy has a high success rate, because it keeps them from using, and that's fine, I suppose. So is the concept of support groups, rap sessions, and "buddy interventions" when things get out-of-hand.

The people who do well in AA, NA, *et.al*, are those that develop coping skills that directly deals with and addresses the issues that cause the comfort-seeking behavior. The chemicals that are part of the old comfort-seeking behavior are merely the means to an end that cannot be accomplished with substance abuse.

The intoxicating chemicals induce in the person the apparency of a solution, much like a shot of morphine will kill the pain of a bullet wound; and you might believe that "I ain't shot", or the Monty Python⁹-ish "*It's nuthin' but a flesh wound!*"¹⁰, but in reality, you're bleeding to death.

Simply speaking, and in summation, alcoholism, drug addiction, or any substance abuse that alters consciousness, is not a disease; it is an addiction that is driven initially by the desire to escape from, or mitigate the emotional pain of some unresolved conflict, stress, or problem, and then continued by the fact that the substances are both physically and psychologically addictive.

Alcohol is legal to buy, and drugs (legal or otherwise) are easy to come by. Availability is not a problem. In order to be "cured", you must not think of yourself as having "an incurable disease". If you allow yourself to believe it, it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the disease is incurable, then you are doomed to living the rest of your life in recovery. You'll spend a good portion of that life attending AA/NA meetings where you are constantly reminded that you are powerless over a bottle of fermented grape squeezings. If you believe that you are powerless. Then you are doomed to psychological cravings that are in part, induced by your belief that you'll always have them. People have "believed" themselves to death, you know, and people have believed themselves to a state of wellness.

In order to walk away with complete confidence, you must deal with whatever demons pushed you to seek comfort in a bottle, or in a crack stem, at the end of a needle, or whatever you're using to "self-medicate". Slay those dragons, and there will no longer be a need to feel helpless, or doomed to spending the rest of your life "in recovery" because of your misguided beliefs. You can't fight that battle alone, and all the "friends" in the world can't help you. My good friend Tom used to say, "*God's gotta' be 'in there', somewhere.*"

Labeling alcoholics or drug addicts as "diseased", I believe is wrong. There is absolutely no empirical scientific evidence to support it, and it takes the focus off the actual problem that is never dealt with. It is a philosophy from the pit of hell, driven by the practice of psychology and validated by what Paul described in his letter to Timothy as: "*profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.*" - 1 Timothy 6:20b KJV

⁹ Monty Python - a famous British comedy group airing on the BBC.

¹⁰ From the movie: "In Search of The Holy Grail" - a hilarious spoof on The Knights of The Round Table.

Resisting the temptation to fall into the old “comfort-seeking” behaviors may be efficacious to keep someone from taking another drink or “hit” for years, even decades. Nevertheless, the person operating under the premise that his life is controlled by a disease that is incurable, can never fully extricate himself from the belief that he will always crave a drink, and will never get to the core issues that drive the cravings. I believe that believing that alcoholism is an inherited disease, or even a disease one can “acquire”, is a defeatist attitude that becomes a perpetual, self-fulfilling prophecy.

One thing that the “alcoholism is a disease” philosophy does, is that it allows the “treatment” of the malady by doctors and psychologists to be payable by most health insurance plans - and that, I believe, is the real reason and the real motivation behind why “*The Merchants of Chaos*” want you to believe it. Somebody is making a lot of money from your misery – but that's nothing new under the sun, now is it?

Godspeed and God bless

WebPastor David Todeschini

