



Anxiety

Male -v- Female Response and Alcohol Use



Gender differences play a major role when it comes to dealing with stressful situations and psychological disorders, particularly with anxiety. A study linking emotional responses to anxiety has pointed out women have greater rates of anxiety disorders compared to men, but men deal with anxiety and depression through alcohol cravings.

Women like to confront their depression and anxieties, and men would rather seek diversion and turn to alcohol. When men become upset, they are more likely to want alcohol.

The study, headed by Tara M. Chaplin, associate research scientist at Yale University School of Medicine, acknowledges that men and women have natural differences in dealing with stressful situations. Women for example, are more apt to admit that they are anxious or depressed – leading to a lot of anxiety disorders, while men are more exposed to alcohol use disorders because of this resultant craving in times of distress.

A study of 54 healthy adult social drinkers were sampled and profiled into the following: stressful, neutral/relaxing, and alcohol-related, all in separate sessions and separate days in random. Chaplin, along with other colleagues, assessed their subjective emotions, cardiovascular arousal based on blood pressure and heart rate, self-reported alcohol craving, including behavioural and body responses.

It was confirmed that women confessed more anxiety and depression compared to men, while men's stressful emotional arousal was connected to alcohol cravings.

“After listening to the stressful story, women reported more sadness and anxiety than men,” said Chaplin, “as well as greater behavioural arousal. But, for the men ... emotional arousal was linked to increases in alcohol craving. In other words, when men are upset, they are more likely to want alcohol.”

On average, men drank more alcohol than women, and these findings also showed that men had more experience with alcohol. This only meant that whenever they are anxious and

depressed, alcohol is a way to cope. Researchers speculate that this may either be a learned behaviour or it may have something to do with known gender differences in brain pathways.

Researchers were also able to confirm that there is a greater societal acceptance of “emotionality,” particularly sadness and anxiety, in women than in men, noted Chaplin.

This goes to show that whenever women are depressed, they are more likely to focus on all the negative aspects of the distress. They tend to over-analyse, do a mental replay about their negative emotions, and this could spell higher anxiety disorders and a compromised mental health. Men on the other hand, would want to distract themselves instead to gain control of the distress but diversion and/or evasion – they will always try harder not to think about it. Findings also show that men have greater blood pressure responses to distress, but no reports of anxiety and depression exist

Taken from

<http://www.anxietypanicattacks.org.uk/anxiety-guides/men-more-likely-to-crave-alcohol-towards-anxiety>