

PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF PERSONALITY OF THE ALCOHOL-DEPENDENT EMPLOYEES OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

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Abstract: Alcohol addiction in professional environment has long been a research subject of experts in different countries and still causes long standing and sustainable interest. Today, the problem of alcoholism, in particular in professional environment, is especially acute in Russia, and like many other social problems, it touches upon many aspects of life of contemporary Russian person. Today, alcohol and drug addiction in Russia cannot be seen only as a narrow medical problem. This disease affects not only individuals, but society in general, being not only a consequence of certain social rejection of people, but also largely contributes to the slow socio-economic development of the country. The article analyzes the psychological profile of the persons, consuming alcohol during long period of time and continuing working in the law enforcement system. The authors describe the process and the nature of the relationship between long standing use of alcohol and personality traits of the person. The present investigation aims at studying the specific behavior of the law enforcement officers, who have problems with alcohol addiction and work in the system of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for over three years. The authors analyze the trend of relationships, self-esteem of emotional states, anxiety, as well as subjective reasons for the frequent use of alcohol, and difficulties in professional activities associated with alcoholism. Based on conducted analysis, the authors of the article suggest practical recommendations related to the use of psychological training as a method to reduce cravings for alcohol dependency in law enforcement officers.

Keywords: Professional activity, alcohol addiction, effect of alcohol on personality, professional activity and alcohol, emotional state, tendency in relationships, psychology of learning, psychological training.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, along with problems relevant to contemporary society, such as increasing poverty, low standard of living of the population, high levels of crime, and lower level of education, we can note also the problem of nation's alcoholization.

The problem of alcoholism in Russia, like most other social problems, is of systemic nature, affecting many aspects of contemporary person's life.

Today, the alcoholism in contemporary Russia cannot be seen only as a narrow medical problem. This disease affects not only certain individuals, but society in general, being not only a consequence of a certain social rejection of people, but also in many respects contributing to the slowing down of the country's socio-economic development.

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Year over year alcohol directly or indirectly causes the death of over five hundred thousand Russians. The country has officially registered 2 million alcoholics. According to surveys of sociologists, for more than 75% of children under the age of 14 at least once tried alcohol, while 65 thousand of children have already been treated against an irresistible addiction to alcohol. Today alcoholism does not represent a real danger to health of Russians, though hinders the development of labor productivity and reduces the performance indicators.

Alcoholism in professional activities is not only Russian problem. In the United States (Ray & Ksir, 1993; ADAMHA, 1988) hepatic cirrhosis occupies seventh place in deaths; liver damage due to alcohol addiction causes about 28 thousand deaths per year.

According to National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA, 1992), frequent alcohol abuse at work and formed alcohol dependence can also negatively affect the heart and weaken the immune system.

Therefore, today the struggle against alcoholism is the most important task of the contemporary Russian society. Alcoholism in law enforcement bodies has an even greater threat for the development of Russian society (Road map of further reforming of law-enforcement bodies of the Russian Federation, 2016).

In 2016, every seventh nominee for service in the Ministry of Internal Affairs failed a security test for drug and alcohol addiction, as well as criminal and corruptive addiction. This was reported by Vladimir Kolokoltsev, interior minister, at the Board meeting of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Every seventh nominee for service in the Ministry of Internal Affairs have failed the drug test, 2017).

In this regard, the fight against alcoholism in law enforcement bodies becomes even more important and should be conducted today at the state level using all means and possibilities.

In our opinion, the attention should be paid to the fact that alcohol addiction in the professional and living environment in contemporary science is examined to a greater extent from the biomedical viewpoint. Despite the availability of a number of works (Ermilov A.A., 2015; Kubyshko V.L., Adaev A.I., Cheverdiuk L.N., 2008.; Zeigarnik B.V., 2007) et al., socio-psychological aspect of professional alcoholism, its causes and consequences require additional attention of the scientific community.

The aim of our study was to analyze the psychological features of individuals, who for a long period of time drink alcohol and continue professional activity in law enforcement bodies.

Law enforcement officers in number of 45 persons were the object of our analysis. All testees aged from 30 to 35 years. The sample included individuals both having and not having problems with alcohol addiction. All law enforcement officers had at least 3 years' work experience.

METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, our study relied on the model of the value regulation of behavior and interpersonal relations (A.A. Bodalex, 1988; V.A. Yadov, 1994; Yu.E. Ovchinnikova (Muzhichkova), 2016), theories explaining the causes of deviant behavior (Ya.I. Gilinsky, 2009; J. Macionis, 2010; T.A. Khagurov, 2014), as well as theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of addictive behaviors (T.P. Korolenko, T.A. Donskikh, 1990; S.A. Kulakov, 1998; V.Ya. Semke, 2012; and S.L. Soloviev 2009).

Research methods include

1. Communication methods;
2. Psychodiagnostic methods;
3. Mathematical processing methods.

The aim of our study was to investigate the specific behavior of the law enforcement officers, who had problems with alcohol addiction. Based on the analysis of literature on the concerned topic, we revealed that the majority of authors focus on the following problematic aspects of social interaction of noted individuals with professional social environment: violation of the system of professional orientation of relationships, frequent depressed mood of law enforcement officers, the rapid transition from the state of inhibition to excitation, aggressive type of interaction and high level of anxiety.

Choice of psychodiagnostic tools was made based on the goal set in the work.

Conducted empirical research procedure included an empirical study to identify differences in the personality traits of law enforcement officers with and without an alcohol drinking problem.

The selection was done anonymously, based on the questionnaire, in which the testees assessed their behavior in terms of symptoms peculiar to the initial stage of alcoholism, more specifically, a strong degree of alcoholic intoxication with alcohol-induced memory dysfunctions and the “eclipse” syndrome, constant thoughts about alcohol, feeling that drinking small amounts of alcohol does not bring satisfaction, strong wish to drink “for the future”, and feeling greed for alcohol. However, the testees felt some guilt and avoided conversations with colleagues about their thirst for alcohol.

The study was conducted during spare time in February-March of 2016.

Psychodiagnostic methods included the following:

1. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI).
2. Self-rating methodology of emotional state. Zung self-rating depression scale.
3. Spielberger state-trait anxiety inventory (STAI).
4. Leary’s method of interpersonal personality diagnosis (Karelin A.A., 2007).

Methodology based work was carried out individually in the course of the conversation.

Besides, the observation and interview methods were used as additional diagnostic methods. Obtained results were recorded immediately after the observation. The results of the experimental study were subjected to mathematical-statistical processing based on the STATISTICA software (version 5.5) using the method for assessing the reliability of differences in the p -level and the distribution of characteristics (Student's t -test) of the correlation analysis.

RESULTS

First, we discuss the research results of the alcohol-dependent personality of law enforcement officers using the MMPI method. The average values of the personality character research are shown in Figure 1.

The data obtained allow concluding that the testees from the internal affairs bodies, who often consume alcohol, exhibit the following character traits:

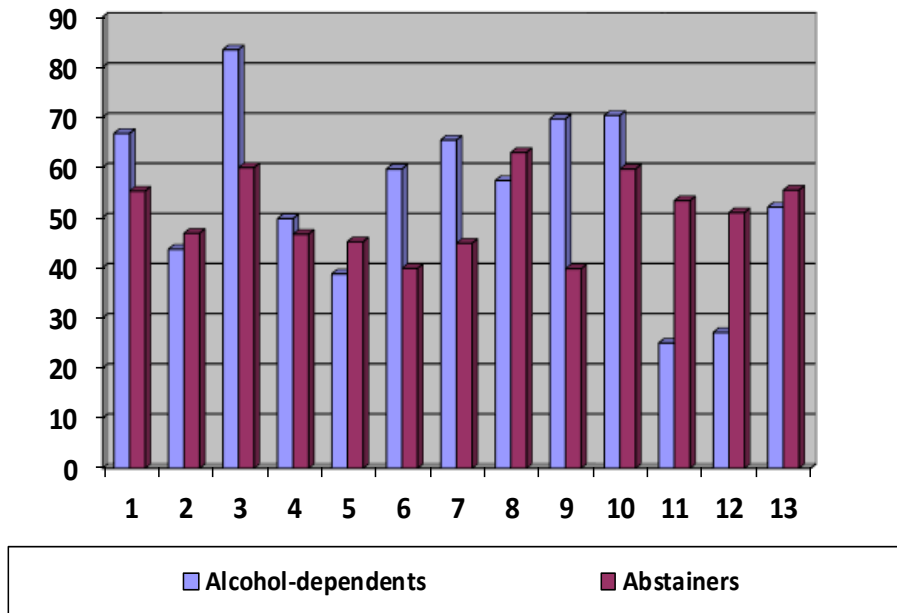


Figure 1: Average values of the personality character research based on MMPI method
 1 - Correction scale (C); 2 - False scale (F); 3 - Reliability scale (R);
 4 - "Working capacity - fatigue"; 5 - "Activity - passivity"; 6 - "Abundant life - spiritual bankruptcy"; 7 - "Freedom - dependence"; 8 - "Peacefulness - aggressiveness";
 9 - "Calm - alert"; 10 - "Impulsiveness - moderation". 11 - "Moral perfection - guilt feeling"; 12 - "Uplift in mood - depression"; 13 - "Relaxedness - tension".

Among the dominant personal qualities we should note the following:

1. Intolerance of other opinions;
2. Contumacy;
3. Resentment;
4. Distrust, perseverance;
5. The desire to “bring out into the open” those, who are wrong or dishonest

The testees of the **control group** have positive self-esteem. The character of these law enforcement officers manifest traits such as:

1. Independence;
2. Resolution;
3. Ambition;
4. Vanity;
5. Strong interest to what seems to be the most important thing in life;
6. Ability to inspire others with their vision;
7. Optimism;
8. Love for life;
9. Moderate risk liability.

Statistically significant differences were obtained for five variables, which are addiction (Student's *t*-test equal to 4.865), guilt feeling (Student's *t*-test - 7.319), anxiety (Student's *t*-test - 11.453), exinanition (Student's *t*-test -5.698), and depression (Student's *t*-test - 7.751).

For all variables the level of P was less than 0.05 %.

As a psychodiagnostic method for assessing emotional states of alcohol-dependent persons we used “Self-rating methodology of emotional state”.

The results obtained show that the emotional background of mood in alcohol-dependent group is reduced and has a more peaked pattern as compared to the control group. This indicates the instability of emotional reactions and frequent mood changes.

Employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in self-reports about their own mood do not point boredom, irritability and aggression; though emphasize only their own craving for impulsive actions and greater freedom in expressing their feelings and actions.

Among the most distinctive attributes of these law enforcement officers we should note the low self-control, disregard for social norms of behavior, as well as a pronounced tendency to dominate and higher levels of anxiety in stressful situations.

For all variables studied based on this methodology, we obtained statistically significant differences. The reliability level of differences amounted to 1%.

Study of depression level of alcohol-dependent law enforcement officers based on “Zung self-rating depression scale”

The average value of the scale in the studied group is significantly higher than that in the control group (39.8) and amounts to 50.35 points that is represented in Figure 2. This value is interpreted as availability in testees of minimal, mild depression.

However, this result may indicate the instability of the emotional state, as well as indicate the affective disorders in testees, such as in particular, the depressive syndrome.

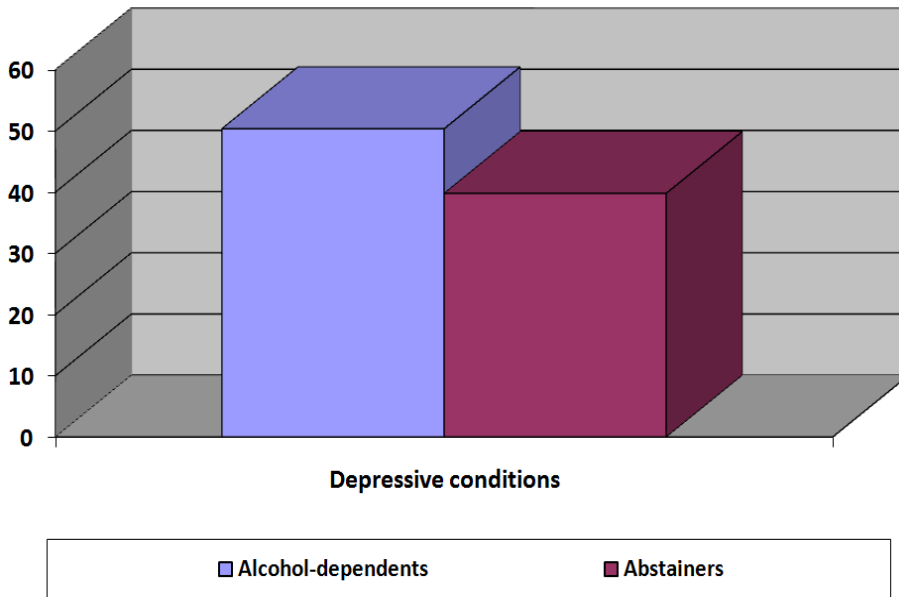


Figure 2: Average values of depressive condition severity in law enforcement officers

Student's *t*-test was 6.856 at P level of 1%.

This suggests that for this variable we obtained statistically significant difference, and thus we can interpret the obtained result to be meaningful.

The testees are subject to such psychological experiences as:

1. Feeling of spiritual bankruptcy;
2. Difficulty in decision-making;
3. Irritability;
4. Easy fatiguability;
5. Feelings of inner stress,
6. Sleep disorders.

The study of the level of situational and personal anxiety of alcohol-dependent law enforcement officers based on “Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory”(STAI)

The average value of the scale of studied group is significantly higher than that in the control and equals to 46.8 points for state anxiety and 47 points for trait anxiety, while in the control group, state anxiety amounted to 28.25 points, and trait anxiety amounted to 27.55 points. These results are presented in Figure 3.

Such values are interpreted as the availability in testees of a high level of trait and state anxiety.

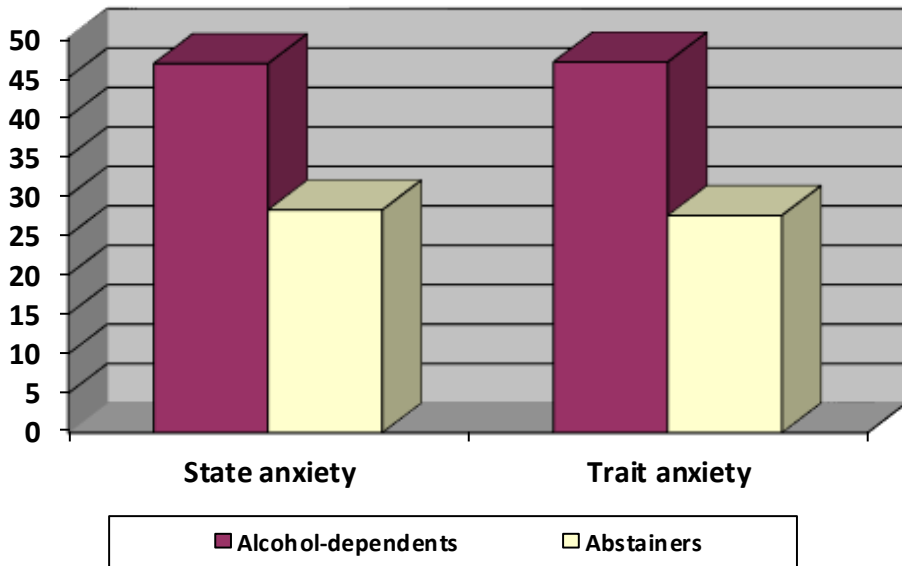


Figure 3: Average assessment values of anxiety level in law enforcement officers

Trait anxiety refers to relatively stable individual characteristic, which gives the idea concerning a person’s predisposition to anxiety, that is, the tendency of a person to perceive a wide range of situations as threatening, and to respond to these situations through state of anxiety, the intensity of which does not reflect the objective dangers. Anxiety as a condition is characterized by subjectively experienced emotions of stress, worry, and concern, followed by activation of the neurovegetative system.

Student’s *t*-test for state anxiety amounted to 12.897 at P equal to 5%, and Student’s *t*-test was 11.674, at a 5% confidence level.

The research result of peculiarities in interpersonal relations of alcohol-dependent patients based on “Leary’s method of interpersonal personality diagnosis”.

The main purpose of using Leary's method in the current study is investigating the relationship of the peculiarities of interpersonal relations of testees with alcohol abuse depending on their specific character traits.

Analysis of diagnostic results concerning interpersonal relations orientation of alcohol-dependent law enforcement officers, based on Leary's method.

The average values, obtained using this method, are presented in Table 1 and Figure 4.

TABLE 1: AVERAGE VALUES OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS ORIENTATION AMONG LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Alcohol-dependent persons</i>	<i>Abstainers</i>	<i>Statistically significant differences</i>
Authoritarian	6.2	4.2	5%
Selfish	5.4	3.45	5%
Aggressive	5.45	4.4	–
Suspicious	6.55	5.6	–
Obedient	6.65	3.25	1%
Dependent	7.4	4.75	1%
Friendly	4.45	4.05	–
Altruistic	4.2	4.95	–

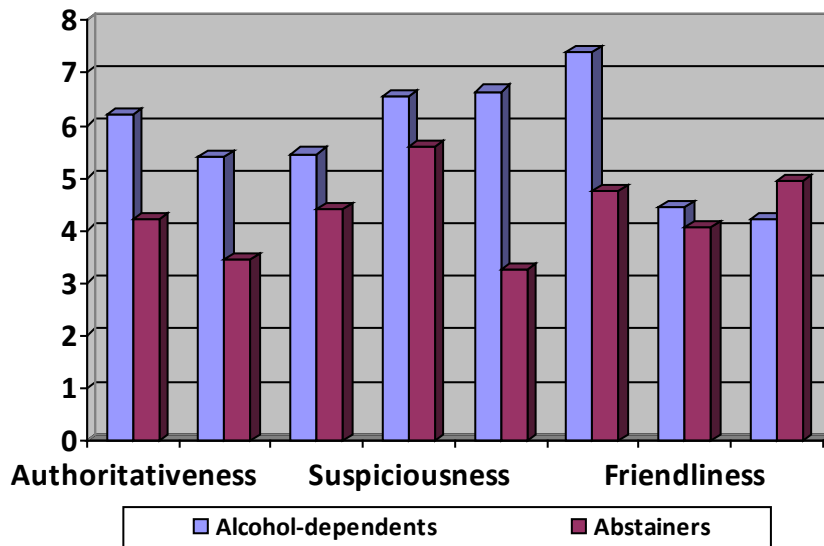


Figure 4: Average values of the diagnostic of orientation in relationships among law enforcement officers

The average values in both groups obtained by this technique fall in the same area of interpretation. However, the location of basic social orientations on discogram of the alcohol-dependent group differs from that of the control group.

By comparing discograms of the studied groups we identified the most significant differences between indicators on the fifth scale of “obedience” (Experimental group – 6.65, control group – 3.25), and the sixth scale of “dependence” (Experimental group – 7.4, control group – 4.75).

Presented figure shows that the testees of alcohol-dependent group are characterized by the dominated dependent type of relationship to others. Suspicious and obedient personality types are less pronounced though emerging in the social interaction process.

Performed correlation analysis allows revealing a positive correlation of trait anxiety with aggression, reduced mood, and neurotic disorders.

Correlation analysis showed that such a property of the individual as suspicion is negatively associated with mood elevation. This relationship suggests that the increase in the indicator of “suspicion” entails reduction in the indicator of “mood elevation”, and vice versa.

As a characteristic feature of the individuals suffering from alcohol dependence we should note mood instability.

It is important to emphasize that the most pronounced traits in the temper of testees from the alcohol-dependent group include:

1. Intolerance of other opinions;
2. Stubbornness;
3. Sensibilities;
4. Distrust;
5. Insistence.

In our opinion, another important trait of alcohol-dependent personality is a strong belief of the testees of the studied group that they have no pronounced craving for alcohol.

DISCUSSION

The obtained data allow concluding that the tested law enforcement officers, who often consume alcohol, have the character trait expressed in the predominant motivation of self-affirmation and success.

During the conversation, our testees showed character traits such as authoritarianism, competitiveness, and the desire to demonstrate organizational skills.

Independence in defending their opinions, as well as the imperative pressure from others causes their protest reactions. Response to criticism may cause possible sensibilities and irascibility. They are characterized by a rigid type of response. Stress reaction is expressed by projecting own distrust on others. Conflict situations may cause explosive reaction.

The basic needs are retaining their positions and the preservation of the authority.

In thinking they manifest concreteness, though sometimes there is a tendency to over-focusing on the same thoughts.

As a protective mechanism the testees of this group use the rationalization, seek to shift the blame for failure on others, and reduce the value of what seems unattainable.

The testees of the control group have positive self-esteem. Their character manifests traits such as independence of decision making and self-fulfillment as basic needs, as well as the need for retaining their positions and maintaining credibility.

The testees of the control group are characterized predominantly by system type of thinking, and a tendency to build a solid system of views and principles.

In social intercourse testees demonstrate independence in defending their opinions, while the imperative pressure of others causes internal protest. They seek to strengthen their positions in the team and demonstrate organizational skills.

In stressful situations they take a proactive stand based on the accumulated experience, tending not to show emotions. Motivation is focused on self-actualization.

Protective mechanisms include the displacement of psychological problems and outward response, rationalization, the desire to shift the blame for failure on others, and reduce the value of what seems unattainable.

Mood swings can be both of a cycloid character associated with the effects of alcohol consumption ("the worst is when after a night with alcohol, you get morning headache"), and take place according to the asthenic type that is characterized by worsening of mood by the end of the working day ("job is so exhausting me that I feel completely exhausted toward evening"). This symptomatology is interspersed with episodes of anxiety with feelings of inner stress and expectation of something unpleasant from the job or chiefs.

In conversation, the testees of the group with high alcohol dependence often complained of depressed mood, though the question of how this condition affects their professional life, many responded that they became more irritable, restless, or overly active.

During the conversation we revealed that most of the testees from the alcohol-dependent group had consumed alcohol due to the fact that a sober life has not brought them joy, though resulted in causeless depressions, irritability and, as a consequence, the desire to get drunk and remove the stress.

Psychologically, these people feel that there is something wrong with them, however they cannot specify their malady.

Anxiety is also often hidden behind other emotions. Irritability, aggressiveness, hostility towards colleagues, or people associated with them by work, can act as reactions to situations of concern.

At that, according to testees of the studied group, the effect of alcohol, which causes exhilaration, is rather pleasant and positive, as it allows relaxing and feeling at ease in situations that previously caused anxiety and fears, and thus allows temporarily "getting rid" of the internal stress.

Thus, comparing the diagnostic results of experimental and control groups we can conclude that people within the group of alcohol-dependent individuals have the following personal traits.

First and foremost, we should note that testees were characterized by the high level of state and trait anxiety.

We have to warn that a high level of trait anxiety in persons suffering from alcohol addiction is the basis, which forms various affective disorders.

The majority of persons who joined the group of people often drinking alcohol noted in an interview that they sincerely believed that drinking alcohol in certain cases is able to remove many negative phenomena associated with performance of official duties, or family relationships.

Many testees noted that the availability of specific traits in their personality structure is directly related to long standing use of alcohol. It seemed to them that many people around, including unfamiliar people with whom they shared official duties, looked at them rather critically.

Emotional imbalance is always combined with anxiety; therefore, affective outbreaks in law enforcement officers of the studied group can be accompanied by violent manifestations of temper and anger.

During the interview, the majority of the testees denied the presence of alcohol dependence.

Often, in conversation, they produced following statements: "I drink no more than others", "I will always be able to stop drinking whenever I want", and "I drink a lot only on holidays".

In conversations with the testees we often noted different elements of aggression directed against those who expressed the opposite opinion.

They often derided relatives, colleagues, or friends.

Another significant feature for this professional group is the fact that development of alcohol dependence results in decrease of human performance measure.

At that, decrease in performance measure often leads to the development of personality traits such as suspiciousness and distrust to people. Accordingly, law enforcement officers, who are under stress condition, are experiencing difficulties in getting work done and compliance with job descriptions, which are significantly stronger than those experienced by their colleagues. This causes not only conflicts in the family or with colleagues, but can result in more complex implications in the form of misconduct in interactions with citizens in the course of professional activities.

CONCLUSION

The conducted study has shown that high level of alcohol dependence among the law enforcement officers causes a range of problems not only in professional but also in personal relationships. In our opinion, this study just sets the vector of further investigations in this and some other related professional groups.

We saw that the growth of alcohol dependence leads to a lot of negative consequences, thereby destroying not only physical health, but also career opportunities and family relationships of alcohol-dependent personalities.

Practical recommendations

Based on the fact that the habit of frequent alcohol consumption generates not only physical but also psychological dependence, the measures to reduce alcohol dependence should include also various methods of psychotherapy along with traditional medical methods aimed at restoring and purification the body (Eryshev O.F., 2002).

Many St. Petersburg clinics on the treatment against the alcohol dependence widely use developed cognitive-psychological training in treatment and prevention of alcoholism.

The essence of these trainings is to gradually change the inadequate relation of alcohol- dependent persons to their habit, and to form new motivational attitudes for long standing abstinence from alcohol.

Groups should be structured in such a way as to maximally represent individuals with diverse clinical manifestations of alcohol dependence.

Experts noted that the presence in the group of persons of various ages, professional status, educational level, and so on has a quite beneficial effect.

Trainings should be conducted primarily in the closed groups, *i.e.* groups involving same participants from the very beginning to the end of the whole training course.

In our opinion, the use of cognitive-psychological training is just the basic foundation to increase the labor productivity of employees. In the case of successful completion of training and reduction in alcohol dependence, it is necessary to integrate employees into a new form of professional relationships. This stage may involve use of special training technologies (Sidorenko E.V., 2001; Makarov Yu.V. Gorokhov A. Yu., 2014).

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