

Cost factors controlling alcoholic drinking.

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AB Gave 2 male chronic alcoholics access to alcohol under experimental conditions. Varying the cost of drinking was effective in modifying Ss' drinking behavior. In Exp. I, Ss operated a switch on a fixed-ratio schedule to earn alcohol. At higher ratio values, drinking was reduced, occasionally to 0. In Exp. II, the number of tokens required to purchase drinks increased if Ss drank more than 2 drinks/hr. This resulted in greater temporal spacing of drinks. In these experiments both the amount consumed and the temporal pattern of consumption were modified. Control was exerted both by immediately prevailing conditions and future consequences. It is concluded that alcoholic drinking is not an uncontrollable process but is modifiable by environmental contingencies.