

Alcoholus

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Excerpted from Dr. Morrison's new book *Carbon*

Abstract: Dr. Morrison presents the materia medica of *Alcoholus*, the central themes of which include: isolation, aloneness, numbness or ecstatic states alternating with despair or fear, intoxicated sensations, distance from others, passivity, dishonesty/lying, the need to feel heard or cared for.

Keywords: Alcoholus, materia medica.

The history of man's use of alcohol extends back to pre-biblical times. Hardly a movie or television show passes without an image of a despondent person "drowning his sorrows" in alcohol, bonding or mating during drinking or loosening of inhibitions by drinking. Alcohol consumption in this country is slightly above average for western countries. The average American over the age of fifteen consumes one-half gallon of beer (two liters); one-half cup of spirits (whiskey, gin, etc.) and one-half cup of wine per week.

Religious and celebratory use of alcohol dates to earliest recorded history. Many religions use alcohol as a sacrament, including Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Shintoism. The Greeks and Romans used it as a sacrifice to their gods. The worship of Bacchus or Dionysus was performed through drunken revels. Almost every wedding ends in a toast of alcohol. On the other hand, exhortations against alcohol use also occur throughout antiquity. The shame of Noah, the writings of the Roman philosopher Seneca, the precepts of the Buddha and Mohammed all speak against alcohol.

Paralleling alcohol use, have been attempts to prohibit alcohol. The earliest laws regulating alcohol use are found in Babylonian times – two thousand years BC. Attempts at prohibition took place in ancient China and in Aztec cultures. In US history, attempts at prohibition began with Christian revivalism in the 1820s. Massachusetts passed a law prohibiting alcohol sales in 1836 which was repealed in 1838. Abolitionism and the temperance movement were completely unified until the Civil War. A serious drive by the Anti-Saloon League for national

prohibition began in 1906 – fueled by the rural distrust of "wicked city dwellers" and anti-Catholic sentiments. In 1919, the Volstead Act in concert with the 18th Amendment formally banned alcohol sale and consumption. This ban was not reversed until 1933 with the 21st amendment. This reversal came about because of disenchantment with the results – violent criminal gangs, fashionable speakeasys and restriction of personal freedoms.

Alcohol remained banned in many states for many more years; the last hold-out ended in 1966. The only places where prohibitions of alcohol have met success are religiously motivated. Buddhists and Moslems obey their founders and do not drink. Otherwise, prohibition is only effective for short periods. It is a fascinating aspect of the nature of alcohol that it has historically and across all cultures engendered this type of struggle to control users.

Alcoholics, by the best quality estimates, make up 7.3% of all males in our country and 1.3% of women (this 5 to 1 ratio is similar in many western nations). There is an approximately equal number of heavy drinkers or "pre-alcoholics." Most of these pre-alcoholics avoid slipping into alcoholism, eventually moderate their use and are replaced by new, younger users. College-aged drinking is the main cause of death in this group. Alcoholism is difficult to define, but generally definitions stipulate that an alcoholic causes harm to himself by his drinking – either psychologically or physically. Accidents, job loss, relationships ending, criminal arrests and many other behaviors are included in this definition of harm. General hospital admissions are complicated by alcoholism 13%–29% of the time. Direct health

costs of alcoholism are two billion dollars annually in the US. There is another one billion dollars of property damage and more than ten billion dollars in business losses. The overall cost to our society is literally incalculable.

It is assumed that alcoholism is genetically based, though some have suggested that the reverse may be true; some people may genetically be unable to receive significant pleasure from alcohol. Psychological profiles indicate that lack of parental care and love or inconsistent parenting creates vulnerability in children with dependency problems. (This view is confirmed by our homeopathic knowledge). Alcoholism is associated with a strong tendency toward violence and criminality. Alcoholics spend a great deal of time and effort lying and hiding their use from co-workers, friends and relatives. Twenty-two to forty-three percent of serious crimes are committed by alcoholics – a statistic some claim is reflective of the alcoholic's greater tendency to make mistakes and thus be arrested.

Alcohol is used as a solvent (notably in the production of homeopathic remedies) and a fuel. The production of alcohol as an additive to gasoline ("gasohol") was begun to make a cleaner burning fuel (though no better in terms of greenhouse gas emissions). Alcohol has also been used in lighting (alcohol lamps), as an aseptic and in medicine for sedation. One other medicinal use is in alcohol ablation of nerves in painful neuralgia. Alcohol is strongly dipolar (thus readily soluble in water) and both hydrophilic and lipophilic – thus an excellent solvent and cleanser.

Common Name: Alcohol. Liquor. Booze. Spirits. Grog.

Scientific Name: Ethyl alcohol. Ethanol.

CAS: 64-17-5 EINECS: 200-578-6

MW: 46.07 MP: -117.3° BP: 78.5°

SG: .7893@20° VP: 43@20°

Formula: C₂H₆O.

Structure: This is a two-carbon chain with a single alcohol moiety.

Group: Alcohol. Aliphatic.

Proving: Allen gives an extensive description of this remedy, commenting "collected from various authorities and added with some hesitation...." I find no other remedy where Allen is vague about his authorities! Herscu, in 1998, conducted a thorough proving. The remedy received scant homeopathic usage until recent years; many prescribers have used the remedy effectively based upon Allen's symptomatology.

Best Resource: Allen's *Encyclopedia of Pure Materia Medica*. Murphy's *Homeopathic Remedy Guide*.

Abbreviation: Alco.

Homeopathic Picture

With the huge social problem of alcoholism and its probable genetic association, it is surprising that this remedy received so little attention until recent years. Homeopaths have long associated alcohol abuse and its destructive results with the Syphilitic miasm. However, the less flagrant forms are associated with dependency, secretiveness and lying – aspects of the Sycotic miasm. The remedy fits strongly within the "drug" group with its sense of isolation, alternation of ecstatic states with despair or fear and intoxicated sensation.

The *Alcoholus* patient generally has a difficult childhood story. Often there was alcoholism in one of the parents. Very commonly there is a feeling of aloneness and lack of love or care. The patient seems to find a way to escape into a numbed or elevated state. The cost is lack of clarity, a feeling of distance from people and passivity. These are all aspects of the organic compounds in general.

Mental

Need to feel "heard" or that someone truly cares for him.

Intoxicated sensation.

Low self-esteem.

Lying; exaggerating; distorting.

Reveals secrets inappropriately.

Contemptuous or scornful – especially of loved ones.

Bragging, boasting.

Alternating states: Ecstatic versus despairing. Egotism versus self-condemning. Courage versus cowardice. Warm and friendly versus abusive.

Cheerful and loquacious.

Careworn.

General

Convulsions; twitching; incoordination.

Progressive paralysis.

Obese with a bloated appearance.

Head

Face flushed.

Ulcers in mouth or throat.

Gastrointestinal

Gastritis and gastric hemorrhage.

Liver enlarged and inflamed.

Pancreatitis.

Cirrhosis.

Urogenital

Aversion or diminished sex drive.

Impotence.

Chest

Angina. Cardiac hypertrophy.

Extremities

Increased strength.
Incoordination.

Skin

Boils. Warts.

Clinical

Arteriosclerosis: Stroke, Angina. Chronic fatigue. Gastritis and peptic ulcers. Neurodegenerative disorders. Pancreatitis.

Miasm: Sycosis.

Cases

Shore

34 year-old female.

My problem has been going on since November, I started getting nausea and numbness. Half of my body becomes numb. It happened all at once. The condition began in my face then extended to the body.

It was diagnosed as a migraine condition.

It is really scary.

I have one bad headache per month lasting 8 to 12 hours, but that I can tolerate.

What I can't tolerate is walking around feeling "loaded" all of the time.

I get confused.

I say things backwards.

I substitute words for something else: instead of saying pink I say white. It's like my words get confused. Instead of saying "rock-bottom I say bock-rottom."

I mean it's strange. I get real scared when it happens.

I have two small children and a husband. He's been very supportive. He had to drive me here today. Right now I don't even feel comfortable driving. This is the first time it's stayed this bad.

I went to the emergency room last night. I thought I was going to black out. I called my neurologist in the day to tell her.

Like everything just closes in. Like you're going to faint; you feel nauseous. Disoriented. Loaded.

Now I'm so nauseous I can't swim in the pool. I can't sleep because of the nausea. I haven't slept well for months.

Elavil helped the sleep, but it gives me a doped-up feeling and I can't wake up easily. Feel drugged out.

My mother just went through a liver transplant one year ago. I've been under a lot of stress for the past two years. Two years ago my grandfather died. It was hard for me.

My mother was dying at the same time – she needed a liver transplant.

We have a broken family on her side – her brother turned my grandfather against her. An ugly family war is going on. With my grandfather dying and my mother so sick it all seemed so senseless. But the brother's still treating my mother badly.

My problem began in September with bronchitis which worked into asthma. I was given prednisone, steroid inhalers, and antibiotic after antibiotic. I had a very bad cough. I thought it was walking pneumonia.

Then my psychotherapist asked me if I was grieving. I had been thinking about my grandfather for the first time. It shocked me that she could see it.

Then the numbness hit. They thought it was due to sinusitis. So I took more antibiotics. Then I went to the otolaryngologist. He sent me to the neurologist. That's how I ended up here.

After the bout of infections and missing lots of time from work I was fed up with the pills. I hate them. They tried to give me more steroid pills, but I refused them. No way! That seems to be their only answer. Prednisone really scared me.

I like to swim. I like volley ball. I like being active. Now I can't even drive. I feel too unsafe to drive.

I'm disoriented. Stoned. And that's without taking anything.

I get uncontrolled – it's like a fatigue. I'm wiped out. I could sleep all day.

I'm scared to go to sleep because I feel all weird in the head. That's one of the reasons I went to the emergency room last night. I was afraid: afraid to go to sleep. When I feel really weird like this, if I pick up one of the kids and cuddle them it makes me feel better. It's the security.

I've been working on a Master's degree – another master's degree. It's in telecommunications management. I had a hell of a class last summer. So I took last semester off. And with the way I've been feeling I ended up taking this semester off too. But I'm hoping to get back to it.

I like to achieve things. I set goals and push myself.

My husband is extremely supportive, more supportive than I might have been.

I'm kind of impatient by nature.

I come from a large family – six kids and two parents.

My mother had a liver transplant because of alcoholism. I grew up in an alcoholic family. She began drinking in her mid-30's. She was very depressed

during most of my childhood.

I have a degree in child development – a master's degree in special education, but I work testing software. I need a degree to go with that. Therefore I'm getting the second master's degree. I'm an over-achiever.

I grew up not feeling I was worth very much – so achievement was my way of compensating.

There was lots of one-upmanship stuff going on in my family. Lots of competition. My father's a very competitive man.

I love school. I absolutely love learning.

My oldest daughter is reading now. It's exciting to share this time with her. For the two years before psychotherapy I wasn't a very good parent.

I was withdrawn.

Withdrawn?

I was doing what my mother did: "Not now, don't bother me now." I saw a lot of my parents in me that I didn't like. I wasn't directing any good energy to my kids. I just wasn't there. I went crazy staying at home with the babies. I had a tendency to open the refrigerator and get beer. I was afraid I would fall into an alcoholic pattern.

Bored. If I keep doing sports I can control myself. Alcoholism scares the hell out of me!

Fear of the dark as a child. I used to crawl in bed with one sister after another. I was very scared as a child. I couldn't stand to watch a scary movie or, even worse, read a scary book like *Jaws*. I tried to read it and after just a few pages I threw up. I can visualize things. I'm very sensitive.

Sensitive?

My eldest daughter is very sensitive too. I'm scared for her – it's a hard way to be.

I cut off from my family and friends emotionally.

I'm too sensitive. I would rather hurt my own knee than see you hurt yours. I feel the pain. I can't stand to see someone in pain. I'd move heaven and earth to fix it.

I'm not quite right in the head – off-center, as if I'd taken a muscle relaxer or was stoned.

I like to be in control and I'm just not.

I'm not good as a front seat passenger.

I want to be able to dictate what happens.

[She had been given Phosphorus with some benefit through several follow-ups. The following are further quotes given by the patient until her eventual cure with the remedy Alcoholus. RM]

Feeling lots of pain inside. [Weeping] I hate to cry in front of people. I just feel so much pain.

Not fitting in.

I remember as a child I just wasn't listened to. I remember being part of a family, but not feeling part of the family. That sums it up: I just didn't exist as far as the family was concerned.

I especially didn't fit in, wasn't being listened to.

I told my mom about my recent health problems with faintness, and she said, "You used to always complain about things like that." They thought it was no big deal – that I was a hypochondriac. My husband was the first person to believe me.

The bottom line was I just didn't feel I even existed. Anything I thought or felt could be overruled. It wasn't valid.

How did that feel?

Confusing. I didn't get it. Thought I was stupid. I wasn't sure that what I felt was valid until my husband believed me. It was so weird; he believed me and was concerned about me, as opposed to writing me off. I still have trouble with believing I'm a hypochondriac. It was beaten into me.

I feel I'm not worth much. Not existing. Not worth anything.

I can go to work. I can take care of my family, but don't feel I have any energy to give them.

My mind's cloudy. I can't concentrate. When people talk to me at work, I feel very slow. I can't stay in the conversation. My mind drifts. I can't stick with what's going on. My mind just gets disoriented. It's like being stoned or drunk or in a drug state. I'm not quite there. At times it's so bad I can't look up a phone number.

[Here the patient was given Alcoholus and dramatically and permanently improved with return of her old headaches and sinusitis which also eventually were cured. RM]

[Comment: The central problem in the case is confusion and intoxication. The patient mentions periods of feeling estranged from her family and children. She also suffers from questions about self-worth. This also ties into her feeling of being invisible and unseen by her family – not existing. The complaints come on suddenly. So we can see many points related to organic compounds in general. The family interactions, the hidden family dysfunction and enmeshment indicate the miasm. The great inhibition of the patient also indicates an alcohol of some sort. The strong family history of alcoholism confirms the prescription of Alcoholus.]

ATF