Abstract

The objective of this study was to evaluate the effects of a high dose of alcohol on physiological and psychological parameters in young men and women with a previous history of alcohol consumption. Systolic and diastolic blood pressure, heart rate, state anxiety, attention, time estimation and manual dexterity were registered before (phase 1) and after (phase 2) intake of alcohol (38.4 g) or a non-alcoholic beverage. Trait anxiety was registered in phase 2 only. The results showed that acute consumption of a high dose of alcohol: i) improves attention in men (although the performance of alcohol consumers was not better than that of non-consumers); ii) blocks the systolic blood pressure habituation phenomenon (observed in controls) in women; and iii) blocks the improvement in manual dexterity (associated with experience in non-consumers) in both sexes. On the other hand, male consumers had a lower heart rate than non-consumers, independently of the phase, while female consumers had a higher state anxiety and performed worse in attention than controls, also independently of the phase. These results help to understand the extent of performance impairment of different tasks produced by risk alcohol consumption in young men and women.

Keywords
Alcohol, men, women, physiological measures, psychological measures.