

Alcohol abuse, employment, earnings and marital status

by

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Abstract

This paper investigates the effect of severe alcoholism on the capacity to hold a job, to earn an income and to maintain a marriage or cohabitation. We use longitudinal data from labour market registers covering a 5% sample of the Danish adult population followed from 1976 to 1993 merged with data from the Central Psychiatric Case Register which covers all cases of hospitalizations with psychiatric disorders and their diagnoses since 1969. A matched case control approach is applied. Using this sampling frame, we are able to follow people up to 13 years before they are admitted to hospital and more than 20 years after treatment and compare them with a control group. We find early reductions in productivity from 5-6 years before hospital treatment. Cohabitation is lower for cases and is reduced much more than for the control group. Labour force participation is reduced with about 1/3 during the development of the disease. Hospital treatment seems to have some effect on the de-route but not a lasting effect.

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