Sample Essay

Any and all instances of alcoholism carry the potential for tragedy, with widely recognized and well-documented adverse psychological and physical effects on the dependent, family and community. Yet teenage alcoholism, that is, "the excessive and progressive use of alcohol in adolescents and young adults between the age of 12 and 20" (Bailey, 2010) is especially concerning: since the brain of a teenager is still under a developing process, excessive consumption of alcohol can affect its development with lifelong consequences for thinking abilities and memory power. Treatment for those concerned is available in many different forms but by then the major damage is already done. The best way to protect people from the consequences of alcohol is through prevention of the problem in the first place. In order to do this, it is important to understand the causes. Alcoholism is a complex problem and the reasons for its existence are no less complicated; many commonly cited causes are usually more contributory factors, which are activated by attendant factors and contexts. The possible causes can be broken down into three main categories: social, psychological, and biological. This essay discusses key aspects of each group of causes and the interplay between them.

Social aspect involves the acceptability and the availability of alcohol. Barnham, Richardson, and Perfetti (2011) note five social causes that may lead to the use of alcohol by teenagers. The first involves the basic human need for acceptance by a group. In teenage circles, the use of alcohol symbolizes unity, friendship and sociability. Adolescence is a time when most people need to feel part of a group, and by accepting drink when offered, the teenager believes her/himself to be member of that group. Studies have shown that while most adults take up drinking when faced with problems, most

teenagers start drinking as a celebration, for excitement or under peer pressure (Bailey, 2010). Thus, alcohol plays a large role in the way teenagers socialize with eachother.