

# THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND THE CAR ACCIDENT. FORENSIC ASPECTS

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## **Abstract:**

*Forensic medicine has the privilege to pursue not only the medical consequences of a car accident – the victims' traumas – but alcohol blood level of the drivers, passengers and pedestrians.*

*The study refers, on one hand, to the drivers, their injuries and the level of their blood alcohol at the moment of the accident. \on the other hand, it speaks about the other victims involved in a car accident in accordance with their alcohol blood values.*

*The conclusions are dramatic and bring down the attention upon the fact that, on most cases, whether the driver was under the influence of alcohol at the time when the accident happened, or the pedestrian, but not only on one circumstance was found out that all the persons involved in the accident were under the influence of alcohol.*

*Another conclusion points out the fact that the drivers' alcohol tests results have the tendency to increase year by year.*

**Key words:** accident, influence of alcohol, victim

Is it true that car accidents can be directly connected with the alcohol consumption of the driver or of the victim, the pedestrian? We are trying to answer this question by analyzing 2 aspects:

- how many drivers were caught under the influence of alcohol at the time when they were involved in a road event (accident, with or without any victims, routine check, etc) and

- if the pedestrians or the persons seated in a car were under the influence of alcohol when the accident happened?

The forensic doctors, because of the toxicological laboratories in the forensic institutions, can easily supervise these 2 aspects. Here, the alcohol test results, certificates and victims' examinations are analyzed and elaborated.

In our study we were interested in the following items:

- the gender and the age of the drivers and victims from the car accident
- the alcohol blood value established by the toxicological analyze
- the gravity of the lesions transcribed into days of medical care
- the consequences of the accident (death, invalidity, infirmity, etc)

The study was performed from January 2006 to January 2007. During this time, at our forensic laboratory, a number of 2400 alcohol blood tests were made, 1400 of them of the drivers or victims of a car accident. 70% of the drivers involved in a car accident were under the influence of alcohol at the time when the accident had happened. The alcohol test results were situated between 0,20 grams / 1000 grams and 3,15 grams / 1000grams. A very important situation is that a large number of car drivers involved in a car accident had an alcohol test result bigger than 0,80 grams / 1000 grams. This means, under the actual laws, that they have committed a felony. A large number of these drivers had the value of their alcohol test results bigger than 1,8 grams / 1000 grams, corresponding to a severe alcohol intoxication. These drivers were hardly able to maintain their body balance while standing. Regarding the gender of the drivers who provoked a car accident, 95% were men.

Following these results of the persons involved in car accidents, we realized a very interesting fact: a large number of drivers who did not provoke a car accident, but were pulled over for a simple routine check, were found under the influence of alcohol. There are also the paradoxical results in which, due to a simple failing to grant the way, the guilty driver was sober, while the victim was drunk. The study's conclusion is something to worry about: the drivers caught up by the police drinking and driving are just the tip of the iceberg represented by persons who drink alcohol and then sit behind the wheel. We can only make suppositions, but on certain moments of the day like the afternoon, evening and night, at least 25% of men driving a car are under the influence of alcohol.

Regarding the pedestrians, just a paradoxical number of 40% were found under the influence of alcohol. A reason for that 40% was that the majority of the pedestrians were women and children.

Regarding the gravity of the lesions, we have to mention the following: only 15% of the drivers that were found under the influence of alcohol died in the following period of time. More than 50% of them had suffered lesions that needed more than 20 days of medical care. 1/3 of them still has infirmities or invalidities. 25% of the pedestrians have lost their lives. 30% of the pedestrians who survived had suffered severe lesions, fractures, broke the internal organs and needed more than 20 days of medical care. Regarding other victims of car accidents, a number of 18% of the persons sited in the cars had passed away. Half of the persons who saved their lives had suffered severe lesions. The other half had suffered only minor lesions with no invalidity or infirmity.

From all the facts mentioned above, we could easily connect the alcohol consumption with the car accidents. The car accidents are very dangerous and have the tendency to increase their gravity, as the alcohol consumption increases as well. Because of this reason, it is the professional duty of every person working in these types of institution (forensic laboratory, law court, and hospital) to point out, by any means, the danger of alcohol consumption on daily road participants.