

How hangovers reduce brain function

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Hangovers reduce brain function and memory, according to new research from Swinburne University of Technology (Swinburne) in Melbourne.

The research was conducted in the central entertainment district of

Brisbane and involved breathalyzing and interviewing participants at the end of a night out.

The following morning, more than 100 participants who had consumed [alcohol](#) that night completed an online survey and cognitive test, while experiencing varying degrees of hangovers. The test measured brain function, particularly [memory](#) and executive function.

The research found that those who had a higher breath alcohol concentration (BAC) on the previous night, spent more time drinking, reported worse hangover symptoms and performed the test slower than more sober counterparts.

Why it matters

"Not surprisingly, the more alcohol that is consumed, the worse the hangover and impairment to the brain," says Swinburne Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Dr Sarah Benson. However, Dr Benson adds that this type of research is important so people understand their limitations while hungover.

"It is important to learn more about the causes and consequences of hangover because not only are hangovers very commonly experienced, but they also have potentially huge negative effects on day-to-day activities," she says.

"For example, our study proves that hangovers reduce ability to engage in complex behaviors, and thus ability to drive, work, study or conduct other activities are impaired by [hangover](#)."

A deeper understanding

The team behind the research continues to explore the effects of hangovers on [brain function](#), looking for better ways to engage with a wider pool of participants.

"Getting people to complete the next-day measures can be tricky, as hangovers can prevent participants from completing the prescribed test," says Dr Benson.

"By having our participants complete the next-day measures online, we made it relatively simple to take part but we are still looking towards better ways to improve engagement."

More information: To read the complete study, see: Effects of Alcohol Hangover on Cognitive Performance at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6518120/

Andrew Scholey et al. Effects of Alcohol Hangover on Cognitive Performance: Findings from a Field/Internet Mixed Methodology Study, *Journal of Clinical Medicine* (2019). [DOI: 10.3390/jcm8040440](https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm8040440)

Provided by Swinburne University of Technology

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