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Hangover cures do not work

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25 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Hangover cures do not work

A study in the *British Medical Journal* reports there is no cure for hangovers. The only real way to avoid the terrible headaches is either to not drink at all or to have just a few glasses, researchers say. Research leader Max Pittler of Exeter University in the U.K. found very few studies into hangovers. He said this surprised him as there are hundreds of hangover 'cures' sold on the Internet. His conclusion was plain and simple. He said there is no real evidence that shows people can make a hangover disappear. Unfortunately, no amount of Aspirin, coffee or fruit juice will stop the headaches or sickly feeling.

Hangovers cost businesses worldwide a lot of money. Nearly \$3.5 billion are lost in wages every year just in the UK. The fact that hangovers are not real illnesses means employers rarely accept them as an excuse to take a day off sick. Workers are expected to forget about their headaches and work normally. Of bigger concern is the number of deaths caused by alcoholic poisoning. Just a one percent rise in alcohol sales causes a 0.4 percent rise in fatal poisonings. The researchers also said they want to know why hangovers do not stop people from over-drinking again and again.

Source: <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/331/7531/1515?ehom>

WARM-UPS

1. DRUNKS: What do you think of people who get drunk? Do you think being drunk is acceptable social behavior? Why is drunkenness accepted in some countries but not others? How would you explain alcohol and drunkenness to an alien?

2. CURES: What do you do / suggest for a hangover? With your partner(s), talk about the “cures” below. Do they work?

- Not drinking alcohol at all
- Sleep
- Headache pills
- Lots of water
- Coffee
- Hair of the dog (more alcohol)
- Multivitamins
- Shower

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Studies / medical journals / hangover cures / terrible headaches / a few glasses / Aspirin / sick days / illnesses / excuses / alcoholic poisoning / alcohol sales

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. EFFECTS: A hangover is just one of the effects of over-drinking. Talk about these other effects. Are they good reasons to ban alcohol? How can we limit the damage caused by alcohol?

- a. Drunk drivers kill millions of people around the world every year.
- b. Alcohol-related illnesses increase the cost of public health services.
- c. Domestic violence increases because of alcohol.
- d. Soccer hooliganism comes from alcohol.
- e. Reduced worker productivity from hangovers reduces productivity.
- f. Underage drinking is increasing.
- g. Women who drink while pregnant damage their unborn baby’s health.

5. ALCOHOL OPINIONS: How far do you agree with these opinions?

- a. Alcohol should be made a dangerous drug.
- b. Societies which accept drunkenness are bad societies.
- c. It is sad that people need to drink alcohol to have a good time.
- d. Drunks are not nice people.
- e. People should never abuse their bodies by drinking alcohol.
- f. If a worker cannot work well due to a hangover, he/she should lose pay.
- g. It’s strange that alcohol is legal but marijuana is illegal.
- h. Alcohol increases sexual activity, STDs and unwanted pregnancies.

6. HANGOVER: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “hangover”. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. The *Weekly Hangover Journal* said there are no cures for hangovers. T / F
- b. Not drinking at all is the only way of staying hangover-free. T / F
- c. There are hundreds of hangover "cures" on the Internet. T / F
- d. A lot of evidence exists that suggests we can treat hangovers. T / F
- e. Workers with hangovers lose businesses billions of dollars each year. T / F
- f. Most employers accept workers have hangovers. T / F
- g. A 1% rise in alcohol sales causes a 4 % rise in fatal alcohol poisoning. T / F
- h. A hangover is the best way to stop people from over-drinking again. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|----------|
| a. reports | opinion |
| b. cure | prevent |
| c. conclusion | worry |
| d. evidence | lose |
| e. stop | says |
| f. cost | reason |
| g. excuse | deadly |
| h. normally | proof |
| i. concern | remedy |
| j. fatal | as usual |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. The only real way to avoid | fruit juice will stop the headaches |
| b. have just a few | cures' sold on the Internet |
| c. there are hundreds of hangover ` | is the number of deaths |
| d. His conclusion was plain | worldwide a lot of money |
| e. no amount of Aspirin, coffee or | off sick |
| f. Hangovers cost businesses | the terrible headaches |
| g. \$3.5 billion are lost in | from over-drinking again |
| h. an excuse to take a day | and simple |
| i. Of bigger concern | wages every year just in the UK |
| j. hangovers do not stop people | glasses |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Hangover cures do not work

A _____ in the *British Medical Journal* reports there is no cure for hangovers. The only real way to _____ the terrible headaches is either to not drink at all or to have just a _____ glasses, researchers say. Research leader Max Pittler of Exeter University in the U.K. found very few studies into hangovers. He said this _____ him as there are hundreds of hangover 'cures' _____ on the Internet. His conclusion was _____ and simple. He said there is no real _____ that shows people can make a hangover disappear. Unfortunately, no amount of Aspirin, coffee or fruit juice will stop the headaches or _____ feeling.

sold
surprised
avoid
evidence
study
sickly
few
plain

Hangovers _____ businesses worldwide a lot of money. Nearly \$3.5 billion are _____ in wages every year just in the UK. The fact that hangovers are not _____ illnesses means employers rarely accept them as an excuse to take a day off _____. Workers are expected to forget about their headaches and work _____. Of _____ concern is the number of deaths caused by alcoholic poisoning. Just a one percent rise in alcohol sales causes a 0.4 percent _____ in fatal poisonings. The researchers also said they want to know why hangovers do not stop people from _____ -drinking again and again.

rise
sick
lost
bigger
normally
cost
over
real

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Hangover cures do not work

A _____ in the *British Medical Journal* reports there is no _____ for hangovers. The only real way to avoid the _____ headaches is either to not drink at all or to have just a few glasses, researchers say. Research leader Max Pittler of Exeter University in the U.K. found very few studies into hangovers. He said this _____ him as there are hundreds of hangover 'cures' sold on the Internet. His conclusion was plain and simple. He said there is no real _____ that shows people can make a hangover disappear. Unfortunately, no _____ of Aspirin, coffee or fruit juice will stop the headaches or _____ feeling.

Hangovers _____ businesses worldwide a lot of money. Nearly \$3.5 billion are lost in wages every year just in the UK. The _____ that hangovers are not real illnesses means employers _____ accept them as an excuse to take a day off _____. Workers are expected to forget about their headaches and work normally. Of bigger _____ is the number of deaths caused by alcoholic poisoning. Just a one percent rise in alcohol sales causes a 0.4 percent rise in _____ poisonings. The researchers also said they want to know why hangovers do not stop _____ from over-drinking again and again.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'hang' and 'over'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "HANGOVER" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about alcohol, drinking, drunkenness and hangovers.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- study
- avoid
- few
- Internet
- evidence
- sickly
- worldwide
- just
- excuse
- concern
- 0.4 percent
- again and again

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you know about hangovers?
- c. Why do you think scientists know so little about hangovers?
- d. Do you need alcohol to help you have a good time at a party?
- e. Why do you think many societies accept alcohol when it causes so much social harm?
- f. Do you think workers with hangovers should lose pay if their work becomes slow?
- g. Why do you think people keep suggesting "cures" for hangovers when none of them works?
- h. Do you ever get bad headaches?
- i. Do you think people who drink regularly should pay more for medical insurance?
- j. Whose fault is it that underage drinking is increasing?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think of people who complain about having a hangover?
- d. What do you think of drunk people?
- e. Do you think alcohol should be banned?
- f. Do you have a special "cure" for headaches?
- g. What do you think the penalty should be for drunk driving?
- h. Do you think alcohol is a more or less dangerous drug than marijuana?
- i. Why do you think that hangovers do not stop people from repeatedly over-drinking?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

DRUNK CRIMES: In pairs / groups, decide on the best penalty for the “drunk crimes” in the table:

	“DRUNK CRIME”	PENALTY
1.	Having a hangover that slows you down at work or in school	
2.	Singing loudly in a built-up area	
3.	Peeing or vomiting in the street	
4.	Drunk driving	
5.	Having unprotected sex with a stranger	
6.	Domestic violence	
7.	Having smelly breath the next day	
8.	Hooliganism or vandalism	
9.	Sleeping in the park or on the beach	
10.	Asking people who don't drink to have a drink	

Change partners and tell you new partner(s) the penalties you decided with your old partner(s).

Combine your penalties to ones you both / all agree on.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on cures for hangovers. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. HEADACHE HISTORY: Write about the most memorable headaches you've had. What did you do to relieve the pain? Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar ideas for cures?

4. MY CULTURE: Write a short essay on the part alcohol plays in your culture. Do you think this is a good or bad thing? Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. T d. F e. T f. F g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|----------|
| a. reports | says |
| b. cure | remedy |
| c. conclusion | opinion |
| d. evidence | proof |
| e. stop | prevent |
| f. cost | lose |
| g. excuse | reason |
| h. normally | as usual |
| i. concern | worry |
| j. fatal | deadly |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. The only real way to avoid | the terrible headaches |
| b. have just a few | glasses |
| c. there are hundreds of hangover | 'cures' sold on the Internet |
| d. His conclusion was plain | and simple |
| e. no amount of Aspirin, coffee or | fruit juice will stop the headaches |
| f. Hangovers cost businesses | worldwide a lot of money |
| g. \$3.5 billion are lost in | wages every year just in the UK |
| h. an excuse to take a day | off sick |
| i. Of bigger concern | is the number of deaths |
| j. hangovers do not stop people | from over-drinking again |

GAP FILL:

Hangover cures do not work

A **study** in the *British Medical Journal* reports there is no cure for hangovers. The only real way to **avoid** the terrible headaches is either to not drink at all or to have just a **few** glasses, researchers say. Research leader Max Pittler of Exeter University in the U.K. found very few studies into hangovers. He said this **surprised** him as there are hundreds of hangover 'cures' **sold** on the Internet. His conclusion was **plain** and simple. He said there is no real **evidence** that shows people can make a hangover disappear. Unfortunately, no amount of Aspirin, coffee or fruit juice will stop the headaches or **sickly** feeling.

Hangovers **cost** businesses worldwide a lot of money. Nearly \$3.5 billion are **lost** in wages every year just in the UK. The fact that hangovers are not **real** illnesses means employers rarely accept them as an excuse to take a day off **sick**. Workers are expected to forget about their headaches and work **normally**. Of **bigger** concern is the number of deaths caused by alcoholic poisoning. Just a one percent rise in alcohol sales causes a 0.4 percent **rise** in fatal poisonings. The researchers also said they want to know why hangovers do not stop people from **over**-drinking again and again.