

Just Holding a Drink Makes You Seem Dumb, Study Says

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(Sept. 15) -- It doesn't take a [Mel Gibson tirade](#) to know that people say dumb things when they're drunk. But new evidence shows that drinking is bad for your image even if you don't open your mouth.

In fact, according to a [working paper](#) from the University of Michigan's Scott Rick and the University of Pennsylvania's Maurice Schweitzer, just holding a glass of alcohol makes you look stupid. It does not matter if you're male or female, or whether you drink beer or wine -- if people see you drinking, they think you're dumber than you'd otherwise appear. "It hurts you," Rick tells AOL News.

The study conducted five experiments. One had people judge photographs of others holding an alcoholic drink, a non-alcoholic one or nothing. Another experiment tested how persuasive a speech would be if the audience knew the speaker was drinking alcohol or something nonalcoholic. In both cases, alcohol dimmed the perceived intelligence of the people holding the drinks.

The most damning and universally applicable finding, however, came from the experiment that melded alcohol and job-seeking. Let's say a potential employer takes you, the potential employee, to dinner. The study shows that when you order a glass of wine or a beer, the employer views you as less desirable -- even if the employer orders a drink as well.


Worse still, the study found that when that drink you're holding wasn't of your choosing -- i.e. someone, like perhaps your potential boss, ordered it for you -- "the bias still exists," Rick tells AOL News.

"There are so many associations with alcohol," he adds. And very few of them are positive, as Rick's study reminds.



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