

Alcohol case - TRANSCRIPT

The patient (P) is Greg Ellis, a 44-year-old man who has come to the clinic because his girlfriend is worried about his alcohol intake. The doctor (D) is taking a history and exploring his understanding of the effects of alcohol on his health and his life.

- 1 D Hello Mr Ellis, sorry, is that correct?
- 2 P Yeah, but just ah call me Greg
- 3 D OK, now so why have you come to see us today?
- 4 P Well, it wasn't really my choice, um, my partner thinks I'm drinking a bit much, so she asked me to come
- 5 D And what do you think?
- 6 P Well, I like to drink, but I don't think I have a problem or anything, so
- 7 D OK, well we'll talk about that a little bit later, is it OK if I ask you a few questions?
- 8 P Yeah, sure
- 9 D How old are you?
- 10 P 44
- 11 D And where do you work?
- 12 P I'm an electrician at the power station
- 13 D And how long have you been working there?
- 14 P Well I've been there for about three months. I've been an electrician since high school, and I moved up from the country to the city to take this job
- 15 D OK, and now, are you married or in a relationship?
- 16 P Oh, girlfriend, ex-wife, a couple of kids
- 17 D How old are your kids?
- 18 P 8 and 6
- 19 D 8 and 6, well, thank you for that.
- 20 D Now tell me about how much you drink.
- 21 P Well I go to the pub with the guys after work, you know, maybe 3 or 4 beers most nights

- 22 D OK, so 3 or 4 beers and then when you go home, do you drink more?
- 23 P Yeah, maybe a couple of stubbies, yeah
- 24 D OK so maybe about 5 or 6 beers most nights?
- 25 P Mhm, yeah
- 26 D And that's full strength?
- 27 P Yeah, yeah, I can't stand the light stuff
- 28 D OK. And do you feel drunk after 5 or 6 beers?
- 29 P No I just feel a bit, you know, relaxed, yeah
- 30 D And do you ever feel like you cannot stop once you start the drinking?
- 31 P I dunno, I could probably, um probably could if I wanted to, but I'm not like I'm alcoholic or anything, so...
- 32 D OK, now on the weekend then do you drink more?
- 33 P Yeah, go a bit harder at the weekends yeah
- 34 D And what do you drink?
- 35 P Oh, still mainly beer, maybe a few spirits
- 36 D So how many beers?
- 37 P Ten?
- 38 D Ten? And then some spirits?
- 39 P Mm, yeah, yeah
- 40 D Now, tell me then, has there been any problems as a result of your drinking?
- 41 P No, no, I can hold my drink pretty well
- 42 D And have you had any trouble with the police?
- 43 P Oh, I did get into a bit of a run in with the boys in blue the other week. I had a bit of a blue at the pub, and ended up in the lockup.
- 44 D OK and do you think that's why your girlfriend was upset?
- 45 P Yeah, yeah, possibly, yeah, yeah
- 46 D What do you think?
- 47 P Well you know, not my proudest moment, getting carted off in the divvy van and spending the night in the lockup

- 48 D Sorry, what van?
- 49 P A divvy van, it's a police vehicle that, you know, they put you in the back and there's a cage and stuff and take you to the lockup
- 50 D Well other than that, have you had any contact with the police?
- 51 P No, no, I pretty much steer clear of them
- 52 D Any drink driving charges?
- 53 P No, no, I don't drink and drive
- 54 D OK, how about your work then, have you had any problems with work?
- 55 P Well, yeah, I've been late for work a couple of times recently, yeah
- 56 D Mhm, and that's a few times now in the new job?
- 57 P Yeah
- 58 D (Pause)
- 59 P Yeah, well I woke up last Monday morning at 9 o'clock and I can't really remember how I got home the night before and my ribs were a bit sore, it was pretty, ah, pretty strange
- 60 D OK, apart from that incident, have you or even someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?
- 61 P No, I get into blues occasionally, but no
- 62 D Now let me ask you, do you feel the need to drink at the start of the day?
- 63 P Hair of the dog? No, I don't drink in the daytime
- 64 D OK, has there been any days where you haven't had any alcohol in the last couple of years?
- 65 P Ah, yeah, well there's a little, there was a couple of days last year when I didn't have a drink, yeah
- 66 D Tell me more about that
- 67 P Well I think I got some gastro or something, I think I had this dodgy souvlaki, and I had the runs and stuff and yeah, didn't have any booze for a couple of days, but then I was back on the piss OK so.
- 68 D During that time then, did you feel the shakes or the need to drink?
- 69 P No I didn't feel real well, but I didn't get the shakes or anything. But now I'm back on it I'm fine, so yeah
- 70 D OK, now let me ask you a few questions about your general health
- 71 P OK

- 72 D OK, do you smoke?
- 73 P Yeah
- 74 D How much?
- 75 P 20 a day
- 76 D And do you have a cough?
- 77 P No
- 78 D Do you do any drugs?
- 79 P No, no, no
- 80 D Not marijuana?
- 81 P No, I don't like it, no
- 82 D OK, um now, do you ever feel anxious or worried?
- 83 P No
- 84 D No, do you have any problems with your sleep?
- 85 P No, I sleep well
- 86 D OK, do you exercise?
- 87 P Yeah well I go cycling with the guys from work during the week sometimes, and I used to play cricket and footy up in the country, but since moving down to the city I don't play much any more, so yeah
- 88 D Are there any illnesses in your family that you know of?
- 89 P Yeah, the old man has, I think it's liver disease, he's pretty crook
- 90 D And is that liver disease related to drinking?
- 91 P Well yeah, I guess so, he's always got a drink in his hand, so
- 92 D OK, are there any other illnesses in your family?
- 93 P No, we're all pretty good
- 94 D When was the last time you visited a doctor or a health professional?
- 95 P Um, well I had a medical check-up for this job. Yeah, they said it was all, oh, my blood pressure was a bit high, but otherwise I'm pretty fit
- 96 D OK, did they ask you about your drinking then?
- 97 P Yeah, the nurse said that I was drinking beyond safe limits, she was a bit judgmental actually

- 98 D OK now do you know what the safe limit is?
- 99 P I guess when you pass out often that's bad
- 100 D Well research has shown that if you have more than two drinks every day as well as if you have more than four drinks in one session it could be leading to health problems
- 101 P Ooh, that's not much booze is it
- 102 D I guess it's something that you can think about, it's useful information to think on
- 103 P Mm, yeah
- 104 D OK. Now let me ask you this question, it might sound a bit unrelated but do you have any problems with your sex life?
- 105 P Well, um, I guess if I've had a big night out it doesn't really happen
- 106 D And do you mean you don't get an erection?
- 107 P Well or it doesn't stay up
- 108 D Do you think that's why your girlfriend is concerned?
- 109 P Yeah, I suppose, possibly, yeah
- 110 D Are there anyone else that has mentioned or you know, commented about your drinking?
- 111 P Apart from the girlfriend, ex-wife, the nurse was pretty judgmental
- 112 D So do you feel angry when people say things, or comment about your drinking?
- 113 P Well I guess it's not really any of their business
- 114 D Do you think that you do drink too much, or more than other people?
- 115 P I suppose I have more than some blokes
- 116 D OK, um, have you ever felt guilty about drinking?
- 117 P No, not really, no
- 118 D Now, have you thought about what would happen if you do cut down on your drinking?
- 119 P (pause) No I haven't. (pause) Well I guess I'd save a few bucks, get the ex-wife off my back, get the girlfriend off my back, and yeah I don't really want to end up like dad, so, yeah
- 120 D (pause) Well those are very good reasons there. OK, now I have a few questions to ask you, a few more questions and then we'll do a bit of an examination to see if there's any health issues or concerns, and then you know, we'll have more of a chat about what the drinking could be doing to you
- 121 P Alright doc