

Review of: "[Commentary] Balancing the bio in a biopsychosocial model of hazardous drinking and alcohol use disorders"

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Potential competing interests: Trained in social sciences (anthropology and sociology) and currently Managing Director and winemaker at the agriturismo Antico Borgo La Torre.

The commentary by Morris and colleagues offers an important, well-argued and evidence-based correction to an unfortunately all too often mistake by biologically- and/or medically-leaning scholars to label their perspective as 'biopsychosocial'. While it is great that such scholars embrace the term, it is misleading of them to claim a biopsychosocial approach when it is, in fact, heavily biological. The authors of the commentary are also right in pointing to the danger of essentialism, which seeks the origin of the problem/illness in the core of the individual. When treating an individual for their specific ailment it is right to consider their particular physiological and psychological makeup, as well as their sociocultural and financial circumstances. However, there is overwhelming evidence that the prevalence of hazardous drinking as well as alcohol dependency, and mortality caused by alcohol, are directly likened with societal and cultural factors – and even that these in the same society change radically over time in line with socioeconomic changes, as has for example been seen in just a couple of decades from the 1960s onwards in Italy and France (less harm) and in the UK (more harm). As such, the authors are right to point to the importance of directing harm-reducing efforts towards societal interventions in the area of public health.