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The Impact of Alcohol on the Different Components of Working Memory

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How alcohol affects the components of working memory is not well understood. This study used a repeated measures design to assess the components of working memory in young adult males both before and after a low dose of alcohol was administered. In addition, breath alcohol concentration and subjective feelings of intoxication were assessed. The results indicated that, unexpectedly, performance improved on some working memory processing tasks. Simultaneously, performance on the short-term storage tasks deteriorated under the experimental condition. These findings have important implications regarding human decision making, planning and problem-solving after even small quantities of alcohol have been consumed.