



The Effects of Alcohol on the Grant-Writing Process

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The writing of funding applications is a harrowing process.⁰

Bodies such as the Australian Rejection Council (ARC) have narrowed their selection criteria to the point where they diffract electrons, and purse strings are tighter than Clive Palmer's shirt buttons. Despite the heightened demand for funding, bodies tasked with assessing such applications have neglected to match this rise with an equal number of competent reviewers. Thus, a successful application for research funding is inevitably a slew of buzzwords and promises to cure cancer while turning a profit. To overcome the significant emotional barriers to writing such twaddle, many academics turn to alcohol.¹

This is not a recent phenomenon: in 1970 a section of clay tablet was uncovered in the ruins of the ancient Mesopotamian city of Uruk, in modern day Iraq (Figure 1).² The cuneiform inscription has been partially translated, and reads as follows:

"... Oh mighty lord Gilgamesh, He who sees all, who knows all, builder of walls and lover of goats, your humble servant Enkidu beseeches you for a loan of two sheep, so that he might find out if the berries growing by the river are poisonous..."

Next to the tablet, archaeologist Sir Robart Eversley found the corroded remains of a cylindrical, metal drinking vessel, which may have once contained fermented barley. This find is dated to approximately 2700 BC, and is believed to constitute the first grant application in recorded history.



Figure 2: The Uruk Tablet, and its associated beer can.

To date, there is no scientific data on which kind of booze is best for grant application writing.³ This study seeks to address this deficit. We have tasked six associate professors with writing a grant application for the same project, and supplied five of them with alcoholic beverages, keeping one sober as a control. Here is what they wrote:

Applicant 1: No Alcohol

The field of total synthesis has existed for well over a century. In the time since its conception, the complexity of synthetic targets has escalated, while the number of steps to

reach them has decreased in proportion. A large portion of today's most important drugs are derived either entirely or in part from natural products. Therefore, the continued development of synthetic methodology is of great relevance to the fields of medicine and pharmacology.

Among the thousands of natural products isolated in recent years, the class of Perplexins have received attention for their diuretic and potent antimicrobial activity.⁴ As a result of the complex and convoluted structure, their synthesis has not yet been achieved. We seek a grant of \$100,000 to pursue the first synthesis of these elusive molecules.

Applicant 2: Wine

The felt of total synthesis has excised for well over a century. In the time since its contraception, the contextuality of the systematic tangents has excavated, while the number of steps to reach them has decreased in probation. A larger portion of today's most imported dugs are derived ether entity or impart from neutral produce. Therefore, the continue detriment of sympathetic methogology is of great reticence to the fields of venison and photography.

Among the thousands of neural adducts isolated in decent years, the class of Perplexins have deceived attenuation for their diabetic and potent antibinomial proclivity. As a reslut of their context and combobulated suture, their synergies have not yet been archived. We seek a grant of \$100.00 to peruse the first synthesis of these reclusive modules.

Applicant 3: Beer

This synthesis shit has been around for like ages, right. Back in Aristotle's day, they used to make like urea n' shit, and now they're doing stuff like Taxol and Mycoxaflopin. And they make em so quick too, like in five steps or some shit. Loads of drugs are from plants, including a couple of my favourites, but sometimes we gotta make em ourselves 'cause the plants are lazy or protected n' shit. That's where the dudes in white coats come in.

A while ago, fucken Steve and Garry⁴ found these things called Perplexins under a rock or somewhere, which they reckon is good for curing the clap and stuff. But it's like, really tricky to make, so no one's done it yet. So we reckon, you give us a hundred grand and we'll make the bastard for ya. Waddaya say, eh?

Applicant 4: Rum

Avast, for many turns o' the tide, man has sought to better the works o' our maker, and prolong our brief stay on Gods earth. We hear tales o' a most mystical and magical substance, a tincture made from the leaves of the spiny gypmie gypmie.⁴ This plant is lives deep in the jungles of the lost isle o' Umama Wakho, far beyond the horizon. Tis' said to be a fearsome antidote to the dropsy, and a scourge o' the plague. Aye, for a thousand gold doubloons, we shall mount a quest to retrieve the sweet nectar of gypmie gypmie from the new world. What say ye?



Applicant 5: Tequila

Hace mucho rato que los ratones de laboratorio tratan de sintetizar moléculas, tratando de igualar a las plantas que nos han servido de medicina por muchos años. Desde que se empezó a sintetizar moléculas en el laboratorio nos hemos vuelto muy cabrones, haciendo moléculas cada vez mas complicadas, en menor numero de pasos. Pero la realidad es que la mayoría de las drogas más importantes hoy en día siguen siendo derivadas total o parcialmente de productos naturales, lo que quiere decir que los verdaderos tatas de la farmacología son los Mayas, quienes fueron los primeros en experimentar con la domesticación de las plantas. Esto dio inicio al desarrollo continuo de metodologías sintéticas, el cual es de gran importancia en los campos de medicina y farmacología.

Del montón de productos naturales que se han aislado en años recientes, la clase Perplexins ha recibido mucha atención debido a su potente actividad diurética y antimicrobiana.⁴ Pero estos chatos son complicados de igualar y su síntesis no ha sido posible hasta ahora. Si estuviéramos en tiempo de los mayas podríamos ofrecer la cabeza de los directivos de ARC en sacrificio, pero como ahora todo eso es ilegal, les pedimos humildemente \$100,000 varas para lograr lo que sería la primera síntesis de estas escurridizas moléculas, y ofrecemos a cambio poner sus nombres en la portada de nuestro artículo.

Applicant 6: Vodka

Snoring noises

Results and Conclusions

Our first observation was this: we may have overdone it with the alcohol. In hindsight, giving academics access to an open bar was never going to end well. Despite this oversight, differences are clearly observable between our six subjects. Without alcoholic stimulation, Applicant 1 bashed out a standard, waffly spiel of jargon. Applicant 2 attempted to write something very similar, but clearly encountered problems with the autocorrect feature of MS Word. While consuming beer, Applicant 3 discarded the conventions of scientific English and wrote an extremely casual request for funding. The nationality of Applicant 3 may constitute a confounding factor, and Australians will be excluded from future studies on this topic. Applicant 4 appears to have become a pirate, while tequila has prompted Applicant 5 to write in colloquial Spanish. We found Applicant 6 passed out on the floor, next to an empty vodka bottle. Her sole contribution to the study was a scrawled phallus, which we have omitted for the sake of decency.

We can rule out vodka and wine as effective writing aids for funding applications, but beyond that, beverage choice would seem to be a matter of personal taste. The odds of a successful application are so low, one might as well write in pirate. As for what we were drinking while we wrote this, *hic* you'll just have to figure that out for yourselves.

About the Authors

Gabriela Agaverosinae is a Cactus Master, native to the Mexican desert. On the days he remembers, Boris Yeltsin is an Inebriated Professor at Stolichnaya University. David Goon likes to scribble humorous manuscripts in the pavilion while waiting for the second innings to start.

Conflicts of Interest

David Goon owns half of Stolichnaya Vodka®, and Boris Yeltsin holds shares in Victorian Bitter®, though he doesn't know where they are. When not writing grant applications, Gabriela Agaverosinae makes homemade tequila with ethanol from the lab.

Notes and references

- 0 "These truths we hold to be self evident"
- 1 D. Mitchel, R. Webb, 2020, *J. Chem. Comed.* **4**, 6743.
- 2 L. Kastner, R. Eversley, 1970, *Mont. Pyth. Flying. J. Chem.* **2**, 457.
- 3
- 4 S. Coogan, G. Busey, *J. Unnat. Prod.* 2008, **18**, 450.

A message from the editor

We hope that you've been enjoying our frivolous nonsense. We certainly have, as it provides a pleasant distraction from our failed experiments and the creeping feeling that we're wasting our lives. If you don't enjoy our work, why have you even read this far? But if you do, you can help us out. The real saints among you could submit an article to us, by downloading our templates from reddit and sending your work to goodenough.immaterial.science@gmail.com. The less committed but still worthy can spread the word about our esteemed journal. Notice boards, coffee tables, Twitter, wherever suits you. We're not really a predatory journal, we don't want your money, just your attention.

Yours Insincerely,
Demeritus Professor Günther Schlonk

