

New study finds daily drinking is biggest risk factor in serious liver disease

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Long-term daily drinking, rather than weekly binge drinking, is by far the biggest risk factor in serious liver disease, according to a new report from the University of Southampton.

The study, published in *Addiction* journal this week, concludes that increases in UK liver deaths are a result of daily or near daily heavy drinking, not episodic or [binge drinking](#), and this regular drinking pattern is often discernable at an early age. It also recommends that several alcohol-free days a week is a healthier drinking pattern.

In the study of drinking patterns, dependency and lifetime drinking history in 234 subjects with [liver disease](#), 106 had ALD (Alcohol-related Liver Disease) - 80 of whom had evidence of cirrhosis or progressive [fibrosis](#) - the team found that 71 per cent of ALD [patients](#) drank on a daily basis.

In contrast to the patients with alcohol-related cirrhosis or fibrosis, patients with other forms of liver disease tended to drink sparingly with only 10 subjects (8 per cent) drinking moderately on four or more days each week.

The study also explored lifetime drinking histories of 105 subjects and found that ALD patients started drinking at a significantly younger age (on average at 15 years old) than other subjects and had significantly more drinking days and units than non-ALD patients from the age of 20 onwards.

Lead author of the study Dr Nick Sheron, consultant hepatologist and senior lecturer at the University of Southampton, comments: "If we are to turn the tide of liver deaths, then along with an overall reduction in [alcohol consumption](#) - which means tackling cheap booze and unregulated marketing - we need to find a way to identify those people who are most likely to develop alcohol-related illnesses at a much earlier stage, and perhaps we need to pay as much attention to the frequency of drinking occasions as we do to binge drinking.

"The transition from a late teenage and early 20's binge drinking pattern to a more frequent pattern of increased intake may prove to be a useful point of intervention in the future, and the importance of three alcohol-free days each week should receive more prominence."

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

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