

Two or more drinks a day may increase pancreatic cancer risk

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Men and women who consume two or more alcoholic drinks a day could increase their risk of developing pancreatic cancer, according to a study published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research.

Previous studies have been unable to confirm the association between drinking and the risk of pancreatic cancer, but most studies depended on a person's recall of alcohol intake. Still, many hypothesize about the relationship between alcohol and pancreatic cancer because drinking is associated with the risk of pancreatitis and diabetes, and both of these conditions are known risk factors for developing the disease.

Unlike the previous studies, this current research pools data collected prospectively from 14 research studies, which included 862,664 individuals (319,716 men and 542,948 women). Data collected prospectively means information about dietary and environmental exposures were collected prior to diagnosis with pancreatic cancer. Researchers identified 2,187 individuals diagnosed with pancreatic cancer during the study.

"This is one of the largest studies ever to look at dietary factors in relation to pancreatic cancer risk," says lead author Jeanine M. Genkinger, Ph.D., an assistant professor at Georgetown University's Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.

If individuals consumed 30 or more grams of alcohol per day

(approximately two drinks), compared with no alcohol per day, their risk of pancreatic cancer was slightly increased, researchers said. A drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, four ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled liquor.

Although, there was no statistically significant difference between men and women when comparing alcohol intake with risk of pancreatic cancer, the association was seen in women at two or more drinks per day. Comparatively, the researchers observed a higher risk among men who consumed three or more drinks a day.

No difference was observed by type of alcohol when comparing beer, distilled liquor or wine, according to Genkinger.

"Despite being a deadly disease, there are few known risk factors for developing pancreatic cancer," explains Genkinger. "At this point, it's important to understand any protective or risk factors for this dangerous disease even if the risks are weak or modest."

Source: Georgetown University Medical Center

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