

Increased risk of injury even after first glass

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Most alcohol-related damage occurs after moderate consumption, according to a new doctoral thesis from Karolinska Institutet on the association between alcohol and injury.

Physical [injury](#) related to [alcohol consumption](#) causes substantial costs to society. But while the link between severe [intoxication](#), road accidents and violence is well-known, the consequences of "normal" drinking are much less researched.

In order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the damage caused by alcohol, Hervé Kuendig studied the association between consumption and injuries treated at an Accident & Emergency unit in Switzerland. His thesis is based on interviews with patients who were treated for injuries caused by violence or accidents.

His results show that one in four of the injuries dealt with by the A&E unit had occurred after the consumption of alcohol, but also that this ratio varied widely at different times. Over 80 per cent of the injuries that had occurred on a Friday and Saturday night were alcohol-related.

His thesis also shows that the risk of suffering injury, for whatever reason, increased even after the consumption of small amounts of alcohol. Moreover, and hardly surprisingly, people who had drunk considerable quantities of alcohol suffered higher injury risk than people who had drunk only a little. However, the thesis also shows that most of the injuries that were judged to be due to alcohol occurred after only moderate consumption.

"My results suggest that preventative measures shouldn't be directed exclusively at individual high-volume consumers," says Hervé Kuendig. "The greatest benefit, in terms of injury-avoidance, can be gained from structural measures that affect the normal consumption of alcohol in society."

His research was financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the Swiss Federal Office for Public Health (FOPH), the Swiss Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Problems (SIPA) and the Alcohol Treatment Center - Lausanne University Hospital.

Provided by Karolinska Institutet ([news](#) : [web](#))

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