

# Binge drinking linked with hemorrhagic stroke in Korean men

June 25 2009

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Frequent binge drinking may dramatically increase the risk of hemorrhagic stroke, according to a South Korean study published in *Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

In this study, binge drinkers were men who drank six or more glasses (60 grams or 2.1 ounces) and women who drank four or more glasses (40 grams) of alcohol on one occasion at least once a week. Most of the alcohol was soju, a native Korean distilled liquor similar to vodka. It is 25 percent alcohol by volume. Vodka in the United States is about 35 percent to 50 percent alcohol by volume.

Several previous studies have linked [binge drinking](#) to increased stroke risk. But few have focused on an Asian population. Compared to non-drinkers, researchers found:

- The risk of a bleeding stroke (hemorrhagic) was more than 300 percent higher among male binge drinkers.
- The risk of total stroke was 86 percent higher among male binge drinkers.
- The risk of death from any cause was 33 percent higher among male binge drinkers.
- Female binge drinkers showed increased risk of death from heart

disease or stroke, but it was not statistically significant.

The proportion of Korean adults who drink alcohol is among the world's highest. And heavy drinking is also high. About 46 percent of Korean men and 9 percent of Korean women are considered [heavy drinkers](#), according to the study's senior researcher Heechoul Ohrr, M.D., Ph.D., professor in the Department of [Preventive Medicine](#), Yonsei University College of Medicine, in Seoul, South Korea. Researchers examined the association between [binge drinking](#) and risks of death from all causes and specifically stroke. The study included more than 6,000 citizens age 55 and older living in an agricultural community. They were followed for 20 years.

Some of the limitations of the study are that the data on drinking was obtained by self-reported questionnaires, the population was agricultural and may not represent the entire population and the validity of stroke diagnosis on death certificates was not examined separately.

Researchers said the findings need to be confirmed in other further studies and it is unclear whether the results can be generalized to other populations.

About 3.5 percent of the U.S. population are considered heavy drinkers (more than six drinks a day), according to researchers.

The American Heart Association advises that if you drink alcohol, do so in moderation — no more than two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women. The association defines a drink as one 12-ounce beer, one 4-ounce glass of wine, 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits or 1 ounce of 100-proof spirits.

Source: American Heart Association ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Binge drinking linked with hemorrhagic stroke in Korean men (2009, June 25)  
retrieved 5 May 2024 from  
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-06-binge-linked-hemorrhagic-korean-men.html>

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