

Even low alcohol consumption has a negative impact on overall health

October 23 2009

Low alcohol consumption is bad for your health in general. Researchers writing in BioMed Central's open access journal *Cost Effectiveness and Resource Allocation* studied the relationship between alcohol consumption and health to test the current theory which suggests improved health is responsible for the link found between low alcohol consumption and increased wages.

Johan Jarl, from Lund University, Sweden, worked with a team of researchers to determine the effect of low alcohol consumption on health by measuring alcohol-related [medical care costs](#) and episodes collected during the Swedish Cost of Alcohol Project in 2002. They found that, with the exception of people more than 80 years old, men who consumed up to five units a day and women who consumed up to 2.5 units a day cost the health service more than those who do not drink. Their finding calls into question the previous assumption that low alcohol consumption is good for your health.

Several studies show that people with low alcohol intake are more highly paid. One common, but untested, explanation for this link is that low consumers spend more time at work and therefore gets better pay due to the protective effect of alcohol on some diseases. According to Jarl, "In this study, however, we found that, when including also those diseases where low consumption increases the risk of morbidity and mortality, low-to-moderate alcohol intake actually has a net negative health impact", adding, "It is therefore doubtful if the common explanation of health as the link between alcohol consumption and increased wages is

valid in its existing form."

Speaking about other factors that, in the light of these findings, could account for the alcohol-wage link, Jarl said, "Family background, social networking and subjective health benefits may be responsible. It is not unlikely that the link is actually compiled of several different factors that together give a significant effect of low alcohol consumption on wage. It should come as no surprise that the nature of links such as this is normally complex and care should be taken not to oversimplify".

Medical net cost of low [alcohol consumption](#) - a cause to reconsider improved [health](#) as the link between alcohol and wage? Johan Jarl, Ulf-G Gerdtham and Klara Hradilova Selin, *Cost Effectiveness and Resource Allocation* (in press), www.resource-allocation.com/

Source: BioMed Central ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Even low alcohol consumption has a negative impact on overall health (2009, October 23) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-10-alcohol-consumption-negative-impact-health.html>

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