

Alcohol helps lower heart disease risk for men: study

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Men who drink alcohol every day see a nearly one-third average reduction in the risk of coronary heart disease, according to a long-term study among Spanish men published on Thursday.

The research unfolded over a decade among more than 41,000 men and women aged between 29 and 69, who were assessed for their health and lifestyle as part of a European probe into cancer.

During the course of the study, 609 cases of heart attacks and other "coronary events" happened, 481 among men and 128 among women.

Among [men](#), those drinking moderate, high and very high levels of alcohol all had a lower risk of coronary [heart disease](#) compared with non-drinkers.

For those classified as former drinkers, the risk was 10 percent lower; for those drinking little (0.5 grammes of alcohol per day), the risk was 35 percent; for moderate drinkers (five-30 grammes per day), the risk was 54 percent lower; and for high (30-90 grammes per day) and very high drinkers (more than 90 grammes per day) it was halved.

By way of comparison, a 285ml glass of heavy beer containing 4.9 percent of alcohol amounts to 11 grammes, while a 180ml glass of wine with 12 percent alcohol has 17.06 grammes.

Women also benefitted from [alcohol intake](#), but the effects were not statistically significant, possibly due to lower numbers of "coronary events" in that group.

The type of alcohol consumed did not affect the level of protection.

The paper sheds light on the situation in Spain, which is the world's third largest producer of beer and wine and has the sixth highest per capita consumption of alcohol. But it also has one of the lowest death rates from [coronary heart disease](#) in the world.

To anyone tempted to defend heavy boozing as an act of healthiness, the paper also points to the many risks of alcohol abuse, in terms of premature death and disability.

The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) estimates that of the approximately two billion people out of Earth's 6.7 billion who drink [alcohol](#) regularly, over 76 million have ill health as a result, the paper says.

The study appears in *Heart*, a journal of the British Medical Association (BMA).

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