

Light to moderate drinking linked to fewer heart problems in male bypass patients

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Light to moderate alcohol consumption (about two to three drinks daily) among male coronary artery bypass patients was associated with 25 percent fewer subsequent cardiovascular procedures, heart attacks, strokes and death compared to non-drinkers, in a study presented at the American Heart's Association's Scientific Sessions 2010.

However, bypass patients with [left ventricular](#) dysfunction who were moderate to heavy drinkers (more than six drinks daily) were twice as likely to have subsequent cardiovascular deaths compared to non-drinkers.

"The benefit of light amounts of alcohol consumption has been documented in healthy individuals, but our analysis showed a benefit from light [alcohol intake](#) in post-coronary bypass patients," said Umberto Benedetto, M.D., Ph.D. at the University of Rome La Sapienza in Italy. "However, our analysis indicated that alcohol consumption is not advisable in patients with left ventricular dysfunction and [heart failure](#). No adverse correlation was found between moderate alcohol consumption and any medication."

Light to moderate alcohol consumption was defined as five to 30 grams of alcohol daily; moderate to heavy was defined as more than 60 grams daily.

Researchers used a standard questionnaire to compare alcohol consumption in 1,021 patients who underwent heart bypass and reviewed

subsequent bypass procedures, heart attacks, strokes and cardiac deaths during the following 3 1/2 years. Patients consuming about two drinks daily had fewer cardiovascular events when compared to abstainers.

Moreover, moderate to heavy [alcohol consumption](#) (about four drinks daily) by patients with left ventricular problems was associated with significantly greater risk of dying.

Results of the study need to be confirmed over a longer follow-up period, with more patients and controls, Benedetto said.

The American Heart Association does not recommend people start consuming alcohol to prevent [heart disease](#) because too much alcohol can raise blood pressure and have other negative effects. For those who already drink alcohol, the association recommends women limit themselves to a drink a day and men limit themselves to two drinks per day.

Provided by American Heart Association

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