

# Possible answer found to why moderate drinking might be healthy for some

February 2 2015, by Bill Hathaway

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Moderate consumption of alcohol has been associated with health benefits in some—but not all—studies. Researchers at the Yale University School of Medicine may have found an explanation, in part, for why non-smokers might benefit from a glass of wine.

In a laboratory study, non-smokers who consumed alcohol had increased

levels of [bilirubin](#) the following morning. Bilirubin, a product of the breakdown of [red blood cells](#), is a powerful antioxidant. Higher levels of bilirubin within the normal range have been associated with improved cardiovascular and overall health. The researchers found no such increase in bilirubin in smokers.

"The results are not intended as an endorsement of drinking but provide a possible explanation for some of the [health benefits](#) of alcohol consumption," said Stephanie O'Malley, professor of psychiatry and lead author of the study. Other Yale authors are Peter Jatlow, Ralitza Gueorguieva, and Ran Wu.

**More information:** "Acute Alcohol Consumption Elevates Serum Bilirubin, an Endogenous Antioxidant" DOI: [dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2015.01.023](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2015.01.023)

Provided by Yale University

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