

# Moderate alcohol consumption increases attractiveness

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Consuming alcohol (equivalent to about a glass of wine) can make the drinker appear more attractive than when sober, according to new research from the University of Bristol. However, the effect disappears

when more is consumed.

Professor Marcus Munafò and colleagues in Bristol's School of Experimental Psychology asked a group of heterosexual social alcohol consumers (20 women and 20 men) to complete an attractiveness-rating task.

The volunteers were presented with images depicting an individual photographed while sober and after consuming either the equivalent of 250ml of wine or the equivalent of 500ml of wine. They were then asked to rate which of the two images was more attractive.

Photographs of individuals who had consumed the equivalent of a single glass were rated as more attractive than photographs of sober individuals. However, this was not the case for photographs of individuals who had consumed more than the equivalent of a glass.

This change in attractiveness is presumably driven by changes in appearance. The researchers suggest that vasodilation associated with [alcohol consumption](#) could lead to an increase in [facial flushing](#), which is perceived as healthy and attractive. Low doses of alcohol may also result in an increase in positive mood that is apparent in subtle smiles and more [muscle relaxation](#).

Understanding the mechanisms through which alcohol influences social behaviour, including factors that may impact on the likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behaviour, is important if we are to develop evidence-based public health messages, the researchers said.

**More information:** "Increased Facial Attractiveness Following Moderate, but not High, Alcohol Consumption." *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, DOI: [dx.doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/agv010](https://doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/agv010)

Provided by University of Bristol

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