

Women with moderate beer consumption run lower risk of heart attack

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Women who drink beer at most once or twice per week run a 30 per cent lower risk of heart attack, compared with both heavy drinkers and women who never drink beer. These are the findings of a Swedish study which has followed 1,500 women over a period of almost 50 years.

In the study, researchers at the Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, have followed a representative selection of the middle-aged female population from 1968 to 2000 (when the women in the study were between 70 and 92 years old).

Now, with the help of data from the study, the researchers have attempted to chart the relationship between the intake of different types of alcoholic beverages and the incidence of heart attacks, stroke, diabetes and cancer.

Beer consumption

In the study in question, the 1,500 women were asked about the frequency of their consumption of beer, wine or spirits (from 'daily' to 'nothing in the past 10 years'), and about various physical symptoms.

The results reveal that over the 32-year follow-up period, 185 women had a heart attack, 162 suffered a stroke, 160 developed diabetes and 345 developed cancer.

Higer cancer risk

The study shows a statistically significant connection between high consumption of spirits (defined as more frequent than once or twice per month) and an almost 50 per cent higher risk of dying of cancer, compared with those who drink less frequently.

Lower risk of heart attack

The study also reveals that women who reported that they drank beer once or twice per week to once or twice per month ran a 30 per cent lower risk of a [heart attack](#) than women who drank beer several times per week/daily or never drank beer. Moderate consumption of beer thus seems to protect women from heart attacks.

"Previous research also suggests that alcohol in moderate quantities can have a certain protective effect, but there is still uncertainty as to whether or not this really is the case. Our results have been checked against other risk factors for cardiovascular disease, which substantiates the findings. At the same time, we were unable to confirm that moderate wine consumption has the same effect, so our results also need to be confirmed through follow-up studies," explains Dominique Hange, researcher at Sahlgrenska Academy.

The article A 32-year longitudinal study of alcohol consumption in Swedish women: Reduced risk of myocardial infarction but increased risk of cancer was published online in *Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care* in July 2015.

The women study ("Kvinnostudien") in Gothenburg began in the late 1960s, when around 1,500 middle-aged women representative of the female population of Gothenburg were surveyed and were asked to

answer a series of questions regarding their health and any medical conditions that they might have. The [women](#) have been followed continuously since then, with regular follow-ups, from 1968-1969 right up until the most recent survey which is currently underway.

More information: "A 32-year longitudinal study of alcohol consumption in Swedish women: Reduced risk of myocardial infarction but increased risk of cancer" *Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care* July 2015 [DOI: 10.3109/02813432.2015.1067515](https://doi.org/10.3109/02813432.2015.1067515)

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