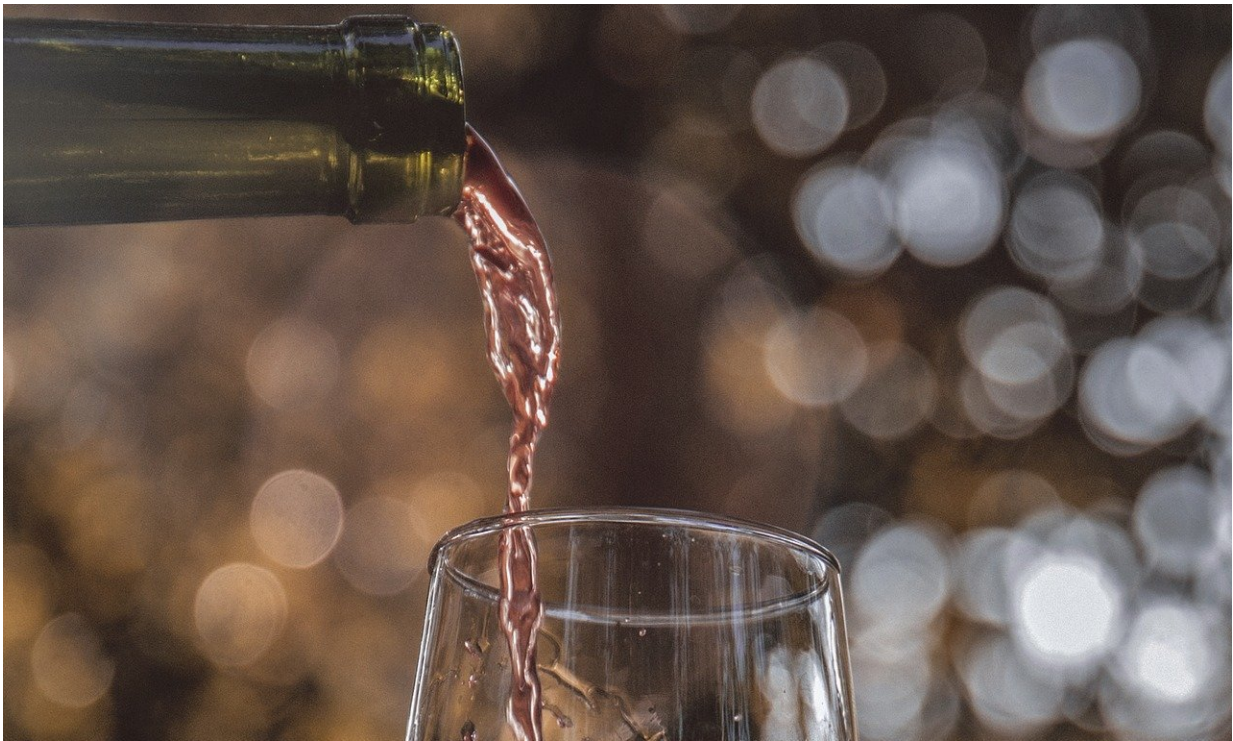


Study examines sickness absence from work among abstainers, low-risk drinkers and at-risk drinkers

June 6 2018



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In a recent study, people who reported not drinking any alcohol over several years were absent from work due to illness more often than low-risk drinkers. The findings are published in *Addiction*.

or the study, which included adults from Finland, France, and the United Kingdom, women who reported drinking 1-11 units and men who reported drinking 1-34 units of alcohol per week were the reference group. (One drink/alcohol unit was estimated as 12 g of alcohol.) Compared with them, women and men who reported no alcohol use had a higher risk of sickness absence due to [mental disorders](#), [musculoskeletal disorders](#), diseases of the digestive system, and diseases of the respiratory system. Women who reported [alcohol consumption](#) of >11 weekly units and men who reported alcohol consumption of >34 units per week were at increased risk of absence due to injury or poisoning.

"Our findings demonstrate that the U-shaped association—higher risk of sickness absence among both abstainers and average drinkers—relates to a different set of diagnosis of [sickness absence](#) for the two groups," said lead author Dr. Jenni Ervasti, of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.

"Some diseases, or their treatment, prevent alcohol use, which may explain the excess risks among abstainers. Moreover, participants to whom at-risk drinking causes health problems may be selected out from the labor market, that is, if they retire early or become unemployed. Then, the [adverse effects](#) are not seen in absence from work due to illness."

More information: Jenni Ervasti et al, Sickness absence diagnoses among abstainers, low-risk drinkers and at-risk drinkers: consideration of the U-shaped association between alcohol use and sickness absence in four cohort studies, *Addiction* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/add.14249](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.14249)

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