

Moderate consumption of alcohol is associated with fewer hospitalizations

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A study of the Department of Epidemiology and Prevention of IRCCS Neuromed (Pozzilli, Italy), in collaboration with the Department of Nutrition of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (Boston),

finds that people who consume alcohol moderately (one glass of wine a day), in the general framework of Mediterranean diet principles, have a lower risk of being hospitalized compared to heavier drinkers and teetotalers.

The research, published in *Addiction*, involved 21,000 participants in the Moli-sani [epidemiological study](#), followed for over six years. During this period, their drinking habits were related to their number of hospital admissions.

Simona Costanzo, first author of the paper, says, "We observed that a heavy consumption of [alcohol](#) is associated with a higher probability of hospitalization, especially for cancer and alcohol-related diseases. This confirms the harmful effect of excessive alcohol drinking on health. On the other hand, those who drink in moderation present a lower risk of hospitalization for all causes and for cardiovascular diseases compared to lifetime abstainers and former drinkers."

Licia Iacoviello, head of the Laboratory of Molecular and Nutritional Epidemiology of IRCCS, says, "The data on hospitalizations is very important in relation to the impact of alcohol on [public health](#). Hospital admissions, in fact, represent not only a serious problem for people, but they have also a strong impact on national health systems. Our study confirms the degree to which excess alcohol consumption can weigh on [healthcare facilities](#), underlining the urgent need of managing the problem, but it also confirms and extends our previous observations according to which [moderate alcohol consumption](#) is associated with a reduction in mortality risk, regardless of the type of disease."

Ken Mukamal, associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, says, "We are absolutely not saying that any teetotaler should start drinking to improve his/her health. However, this research reaffirms that the effects of alcohol consumption cannot be reduced to a

single catchphrase or punchline. This very comprehensive study clearly shows that we need to consider its [health](#) effects based upon both dose and disease."

More information: Simona Costanzo et al, Alcohol Consumption and Hospitalization Burden in an Adult Italian Population: Prospective Results from the Moli-sani Study, *Addiction* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/add.14490](#)

Provided by Istituto Neurologico Mediterraneo Neuromed I.R.C.C.S.

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