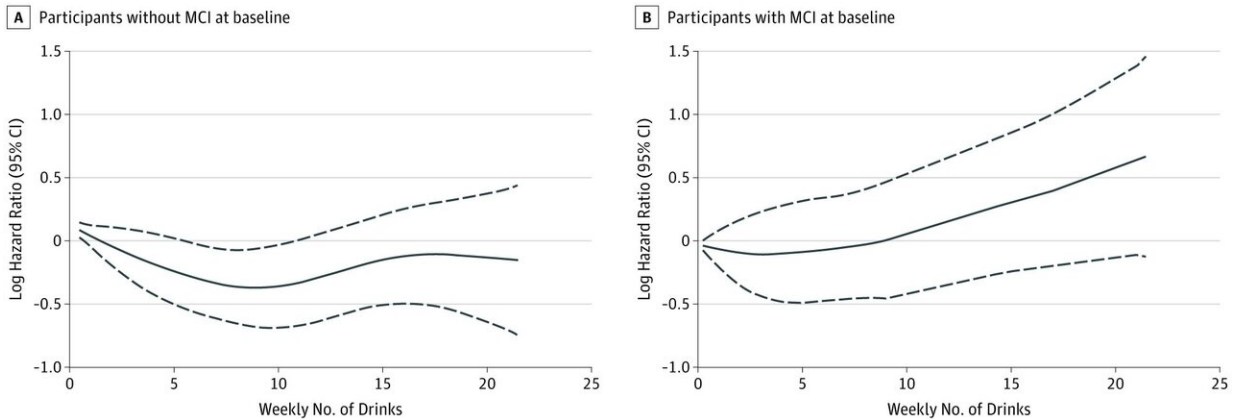


Alcohol intake linked to dementia risk

September 30 2019



Plots show log hazard ratios (solid lines) and 95% confidence intervals (dashed lines) for risk of dementia by self-reported weekly number of drinks among 2548 participants without MCI at baseline (A) and 473 participants with MCI at baseline (B). Log hazard ratios were obtained from a generalized additive proportional hazards model with 3 *df* adjusted for age, sex, race/ethnicity, clinic site, educational level, social activity, smoking status, body mass index, lipid-lowering medication use, history of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale score, treatment group assignment, and *APOE* genotype. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2019;2(9):e1910319. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.10319

Researchers in the US have revealed that alcohol intake in later life is linked with dementia risk. The findings are published today (Friday 27 September) in the journal *JAMA*.

Dr. Sara Imarisio, Head of Research at Alzheimer's Research UK, said: "There's a well-established link between [heavy drinking](#) and the risk of dementia, but it is difficult to say whether moderate [alcohol intake](#) has any impact on brain health when compared to not drinking at all.

"Some non-drinkers may have a history of heavy alcohol use, and this makes it difficult to untangle links between drinking habits and health.

"This study only looked at people's drinking in later life, and we don't know about their drinking habits in their earlier years. Research suggests that our lifestyle in middle age may have the [greatest impact](#) on our future risk of dementia.

"There are many good health reasons to keep an eye on how much alcohol you're drinking. Current alcohol guidelines recommend not regularly drinking more than 14 units a week for both men and women.

"Dementia is caused by physical diseases of the brain, but there are things we can do to reduce the risk of developing dementia. The best current evidence indicates that as well as only drinking within the recommended guidelines, staying physically and mentally active, eating a healthy balanced diet, not smoking, and keeping weight, cholesterol and [blood pressure](#) in check are all good ways to keep the brain healthy as we age."

More information: Manja Koch et al. Alcohol Consumption and Risk of Dementia and Cognitive Decline Among Older Adults With or Without Mild Cognitive Impairment, *JAMA Network Open* (2019). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.10319](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.10319)

Provided by Alzheimer's Research UK

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