

Modifiable risk factors tied to MS diagnosis, neurodegeneration

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Smoking is associated with higher odds of being diagnosed with multiple

sclerosis (MS), and high alcohol intake is associated with retinal features indicative of more severe neurodegeneration in individuals with MS, according to a study published online March 3 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Iris Kleerekooper, Ph.D., from University College London, and colleagues examined associations between alcohol use, smoking, and obesity with odds of MS diagnosis and macular ganglion cell layer and inner plexiform layer (mGCIPL) thickness. The analysis included 71,981 individuals (aged 40 to 69 years) participating in the U.K. Biobank study (20,065 healthy control individuals; 51,737 control individuals with comorbidities; and 179 individuals with MS).

The researchers found that [modifiable risk factors](#) significantly associated with MS case status included current smoking (odds ratio, 3.05), [moderate alcohol intake](#) (odds ratio, 0.62), and obesity (odds ratio, 1.72) compared with healthy control individuals. Only smoking was associated with case status (odds ratio, 2.30) compared with the control individuals with comorbidities. In individuals with MS, high alcohol intake was associated with a thinner mGCIPL.

"These findings suggest that current recommendations for the [general population](#) regarding smoking and moderating [alcohol consumption](#) may be particularly relevant for individuals who have been diagnosed with MS or who are at risk for the disease," the authors write.

More information: Iris Kleerekooper et al, Associations of Alcohol Consumption and Smoking With Disease Risk and Neurodegeneration in Individuals With Multiple Sclerosis in the United Kingdom, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.0902](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.0902)

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical and health care industries.

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