

Drinking alcohol several times a week increases the risk of stroke mortality

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Consuming alcohol more frequently than twice a week increases the risk of stroke mortality in men, according to a study carried out at the University of Eastern Finland. The results show that the effects of alcohol are not limited to the amount consumed, but also the frequency of drinking matters. The results were published in *Acta Neurologica Scandinavica* on 8 March.

Excessive consumption of alcohol is associated with a variety of different diseases. The relationship between [alcohol consumption](#) and ischaemic stroke shows a J curve pattern, which means that in people who are moderate consumers of alcohol, the risk of stroke is the lowest, while heavy consumption of alcohol increases the risk of stroke. The risk of cerebral haemorrhage increases linearly as the consumption of alcohol increases: the higher the amount of alcohol consumed, the higher the risk of stroke. In addition to alcohol, other significant risk factors for stroke include elevated blood pressure, [coronary artery disease](#), heart failure, atrial fibrillation, diabetes, smoking, overweight, asymptomatic carotid artery stenosis, and elevated cholesterol levels.

The study showed that people who consume alcohol more frequently than twice a week have over a threefold risk of [stroke mortality](#) than people who do not consume alcohol at all. The risk of stroke mortality is elevated irrespective of the amount of alcohol consumed.

The study is based on follow-up data from the Kuopio Ischaemic Heart Disease Risk Factor Study, KIHDS. At the onset of the study, the men participating in the study were middle-aged, and the follow-up time was 20 years. A total of 2,609 men participated in the study.

The consumption of alcohol was measured with the help of a Nordic alcohol survey charting the amount of [alcohol](#) consumed at one time and the

average number of drinking occasions in the preceding 12 months. The data on cases of stroke was obtained from hospital discharge registers, the Finnish Stroke Register, and the National Cause of Death Register maintained by Statistics Finland.

More information: Rantakömi SH, Kurl S, Sivenius J, Kauhanen J, Laukkanen JA. The frequency of alcohol consumption is associated with the stroke mortality. *Acta Neurol Scand.* 2014 Mar 8.

Provided by University of Eastern Finland

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