

Dry January leads to less drinking all year round

17 November 2014, by James Hakner



Giving up alcohol completely during January reduces harmful drinking all year round, new University of Sussex research has found.

Psychologist Dr Richard de Visser found that six months after completing Dry January – Alcohol Concern's annual booze-free campaign for [social drinkers](#) – participants were [drinking](#) less, drinking less often and not getting drunk as much.

Dr de Visser, an expert on health-related behaviour, interviewed participants at the start and end of Dry January 2014 and then again in the summer to evaluate any long-term effects of the campaign.

The research results, published to coincide with

the launch of the [2015 Dry January campaign](#), revealed that 72% of participants had maintained lower levels of harmful drinking and 4% were still not drinking after six months.

They were also more likely to say no to a drink in social situations, when feeling worried or upset, and in situations where they would normally have had a drink.

After going for a month without alcohol, people also reported a number of other benefits:

- 82% felt a sense of achievement
- 79% saved money
- 62% had better sleep
- 62% had more energy
- 49% lost weight

Dr de Visser, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, said: "What's really interesting to see is that these changes in [alcohol consumption](#) were also seen in the participants who didn't complete the whole month alcohol free. Even if [participants](#) took part but didn't successfully complete the 31 days, it generally led to a significant decrease across all the measures of alcohol intake."

Emily Robinson, Director of Campaigns at Alcohol Concern, said: "The long term effects of Dry January have previously been questioned, with people asking if a month booze-free would cause people to binge drink once February comes around. This research is the proof of how, with the help, advice and support we offer throughout the month, our model can really change behaviour and reduce drinking.

"Given the huge burden [alcohol](#) misuse has on society as a whole, we need the government to take action at a national level, but we also believe Alcohol Concern's Dry January campaign can really help individuals take a positive step towards cutting down their drinking and improve their health."

Alcohol Concern released figures in October suggesting that 9.6 million people in England are now drinking in excess of recommended daily limits.

More information: "Academic research reveals Dry January leads to less drinking all year round:"
[www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/news ... drinking-year-round/](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/news...drinking-year-round/)

Provided by University of Sussex

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