Medical Xpress

Does alcohol affect the risk of developing an abdominal aortic aneurysm?

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In an analysis of published studies, lower levels of alcohol consumption were associated with a lower risk of abdominal aortic aneurysm until approximately 15 to 20 g/day, with an increasing risk thereafter. In the *British Journal of Surgery* analysis, the increase in risk beyond 2 units/day was stronger in men than in women.

An abdominal aortic aneurysm occurs when an area of the aorta—the main blood vessel that supplies blood to the abdomen, pelvis, and legs—becomes very large or balloons out. There are well established risk factors for the development of abdominal aortic aneurysm—such as increasing age, male sex, and smoking—but the role of alcohol remains uncertain.

The analysis combined results from 11 large prospective cohort studies, including more than 3500 cases identified from nearly 500,000 participants, followed-up for between 5 and 34 years.

"The association is fairly weak and the evidence is not strong for alcohol either decreasing or increasing the risk of abdominal aortic aneurysm by very much," said Dr. Darren Greenwood, senior author of the study. "If people want to stay healthy and active for longer, the biggest improvement they can make is to quit smoking."

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