vinetur

Moderate Wine Consumption Linked to Reduced Cardiovascular Risk in Mediterranean Diet Study

Research highlights potential benefits of light-to-moderate wine intake, but cautions against excessive drinking and emphasizes a balanced lifestyle.

Thursday, March 27, 2025



A recent study published in the European Heart Journal suggests that moderate wine consumption may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. The research, led by Professor Ramon Estruch from the University of Barcelona and the Hospital Clinic Barcelona, was part of a broader investigation into the effects of a Mediterranean diet on individuals at high risk of cardiovascular disease. The study involved 1,232 participants who were free of cardiovascular disease at the start but had type-2 diabetes or other risk factors like smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, being overweight, or a family history of cardiovascular disease.

Participants were asked to fill out dietary questionnaires and provide urine samples at the beginning of the study and after a year of following a Mediterranean diet. Researchers used tartaric acid, a compound found in grapes and wine, to measure actual wine consumption. This method provided a more accurate assessment than

relying solely on self-reported data.

Over four to five years, the study recorded 685 instances of cardiovascular events, including heart attacks, strokes, and deaths related to cardiovascular disease. The findings revealed that light-to-moderate wine consumption, defined as half to one glass per day, reduced the risk of cardiovascular events by 50% among high-risk individuals following a Mediterranean diet. Light drinking, defined as one glass per week to less than half a glass per day, lowered the risk by 38%. However, the protective effect disappeared for those consuming more than one glass daily.

Professor Estruch highlighted the significance of moderate wine consumption within a healthy dietary pattern like the Mediterranean diet. He noted that the study's results suggest a greater protective effect of wine than previously observed, potentially exceeding the benefits of some medications like statins. However, he cautioned that the findings might not apply to other populations, as the study focused on older individuals in a Mediterranean country. He also emphasized that moderate consumption for women should be half that of men and should accompany meals.

Professor Paul Leeson from the University of Oxford commented on the study's strength, noting the use of chemical measures in urine to quantify wine consumption rather than relying on self-reported data. He pointed out that drinking between three and 35 glasses of wine per month was associated with reduced risk, but benefits vanished beyond this amount. He also stressed that the study only shows an association, not causation, and that other factors, such as a heart-healthy diet, might contribute to the observed benefits.

Tracy Parker, a Senior Dietitian at the British Heart Foundation, warned against interpreting the study as a green light to consume more wine. She emphasized that excessive alcohol consumption is harmful to heart health and increases the risk of various conditions, including high blood pressure, vascular dementia, liver problems, and certain cancers. Parker advised adhering to the UK's guidelines of no more than 14 units of alcohol per week, equivalent to six pints of beer or six small glasses of wine, to minimize health risks.

The study underscores the importance of a balanced diet, regular exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, and avoiding smoking as healthier ways to protect heart health. While moderate wine consumption may offer some benefits, it should be part of a broader lifestyle approach to cardiovascular health. Further research is needed to establish a definitive link between wine consumption and heart health benefits.