

Evidence of Harmful Effects of Alcohol Stronger Than Data on Benefits



The evidence of the harmful effects of alcohol outweighs data on the benefits of drinking, a physician writes in the current issue of the journal *Addiction*.

While moderate drinking has been associated with several health benefits, there is not enough proof of alcohol's beneficial effects to recommend it, wrote Hans Olav Fekjaer, a Norwegian psychiatrist.

"People have several motives for drinking alcohol, but most evidence today indicates that health is not a valid argument," Fekjaer told Reuters.

Having one or two drinks daily has been associated with reducing the risk of health problems including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and the common cold, he noted.

Most of the studies that link moderate drinking and health benefits are observational. This research finds associations between lifestyle choices and health outcomes, but does not prove cause and effect, explains Dr. Richard

Saitz of Boston University School of Medicine and Public Health, and the editor of the journal *Evidence-Based Medicine*.

Dr. Saitz added people who drink moderately might live generally healthier lives. "People who drink low risk amounts are much more likely to get mammograms and have their teeth checked by a dentist, to go see a physician for a physical, to exercise," he said.