

Heavy Drinking Speeds Decline in Men's Memory and Thinking Skills



Men who drink heavily in middle age experience a faster, steeper decrease in memory and thinking skills 10 years later, compared with men who drink less or don't drink, a new study concludes.

Men who consumed at least 2.5 drinks a day performed worse on memory tests almost six years faster than other men, *USA Today* reports.

Their thinking skills declined almost two years faster than men who didn't drink or who drank less.

The researchers did not find any major differences in memory or thinking skills among men who didn't drink, who quit drinking during the study, or had up to two drinks daily.

The researchers did not find any clear results for drinking's effect on women's memory or thinking skills, the article notes. The research included more than 5,000 men and 2,000 women, whose average age at the beginning of the study was 45. When they started the study, they told researchers how much they drank. A decade later, they began taking tests of memory and thinking skills.

The findings are published in the journal *Neurology*.

"Much of the research evidence about drinking and a relationship to memory and executive function is based on older populations," study author Séverine Sabia, PhD, of the University College London, said in a news release. "Our study focused on middle-aged participants and suggests that heavy drinking is associated with faster decline in all areas of cognitive function in men."

Alcohol is the most commonly used addictive substance in the United States- 17.6 million people, or one in every 12 adults, suffer from alcohol abuse or dependence along with several million more who engage in risky, binge drinking patterns that could lead to alcohol problems. More than half of all adults have a family history of alcoholism or problem drinking, and more

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than 7 million children live in a household where at least one parent is dependent on or has abused alcohol. [Click here](#) to read NCADD's FAQs on alcohol.