

CC/2015/15

COMMITTEE ON CARCINOGENICITY OF CHEMICALS IN FOOD, CONSUMER PRODUCTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Paper for Information

Alcohol and cancer risk: Study by Cao et al (2015) Light to moderate intake of alcohol, drinking patterns, and risk of cancer: results from two prospective US cohort studies

1. This research paper, attached at [Annex A](#), was published in August 2015. The paper uses two large prospective US cohort studies, the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study, to assess the association of alcohol consumption with cancer risk.

2. The paper is being provided to the Committee for information, so Members are aware of the publication. However it is not intended for review, as the publication date is after the end date of the literature searching undertaken for the Committee's review of alcohol and cancer risk.

3. The study focusses on quantity of alcohol consumed, with categories of intake of 0 g/day, 0.1-4.9 g/day, 5-14.9 g/day, 15-29.9 g/day 30-44.9 g/day and ≥ 45 g/day (approximately equivalent to 0, <1, 1-2, 2-4, 4-6, and >6 UK units per day). Analyses are also undertaken for frequency of consumption and heavy episodic drinking.

4. The results show a significantly increased risk of cancer with alcohol consumption for women ($P_{\text{trend}} < 0.001$) and men ($P_{\text{trend}} = 0.006$). Relative risks compared to non-drinkers by sex and drinking category were:

Consumption level	Females RR (95% CI)	Males RR (95% CI)
0.1-4.9 g/day	1.02 (0.98-1.06)	1.03 (0.96-1.11)
5-14.9 g/day	1.04 (1.00-1.09)	1.05 (0.97-1.12)
15-29.9 g/day	1.13 (1.07-1.19)	1.06 (0.98-1.15)
30-44.9 g/day	1.21 (1.12-1.32)	1.15 (1.04-1.27)
≥ 45 g/day	1.30 (1.13-1.50)	1.13 (0.99-1.28)

5. The authors conclude that light to moderate alcohol consumption (0.1 – 14.9 g/day for women and 0.1 – 29.9 g/day for men) is associated with a small and non-significant risk of cancer overall. In females, consumption of one drink per day was associated with increased risk of alcohol related cancer, in particular breast cancer. In males, the association of alcohol consumption with cancer risk was mainly observed in smokers and light to moderate consumption did not increase risk in non-smokers.

COC Secretariat
October 2015

CC/2015/15 – Annex A

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Cao et al (2015) Light to moderate intake of alcohol, drinking patterns, and risk of cancer: results from two prospective US cohort studies. BMJ, 351, h4238

This reference is attached. It is not being made publicly available for copyright reasons.

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