

More frequent alcohol consumption ups risk for GI cancers

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(HealthDay News)—Frequency of drinking alcohol may be a more

important risk factor for incident gastrointestinal (GI) cancers than the amount of alcohol consumed per occasion, according to a study published online Aug. 18 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Jung Eun Yoo, M.D., Ph.D., from the Seoul National University Hospital in South Korea, and colleagues evaluated associations between the frequency of drinking [alcohol](#) versus the amount of alcohol consumed per occasion with the development of GI cancers (esophagus, stomach, colorectal, liver, biliary, and pancreas). The analysis included 11,737,467 participants identified through the Korean National Health Insurance System database who underwent a national health screening program (2009 through 2010) and were followed for a median of 6.4 years.

The researchers found that the risk for GI cancer was higher for mild drinkers (adjusted hazard ratio [aHR], 1.04), moderate drinkers (aHR, 1.14), and heavy drinkers (aHR, 1.28) compared with nondrinkers. There was a linear association noted between the risk for GI cancer and the frequency of drinking in a dose-dependent manner (aHR, 1.39 for individuals who drink every day). The risk for GI [cancer](#) increased with consumption up to 5 to 7 units per occasion (aHR, 1.15) but remained similar among those with a higher intake per session (e.g., 8 to 14 units per occasion [aHR, 1.11] and >14 units per occasion [aHR, 1.11]). For all six GI cancers, risk patterns were similar.

"Individuals should be cautioned about regular consumption of small amounts of alcohol in addition to the total amount of alcohol consumption or amount per occasion," the authors write.

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