

One-third of people believe alcohol is heart-healthy

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"Despite the equipoise regarding alcohol's cardiovascular effects and absence of relevant rigorous controlled trials, the lay press frequently portrays alcohol as 'heart healthy,'" the authors write.

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(HealthDay)—Approximately one-third of the public believes alcohol is heart-healthy, according to a study published in the Aug. 15 issue of *The American Journal of Cardiology*.

Isaac R. Whitman, M.D., from the University of California, San Francisco, and colleagues evaluated data from consecutive participants enrolled in the Health eHeart Study to assess [public perception](#) of alcohol's heart effects, the sources of those perceptions, and how they may affect behavior.

The researchers found that 30 percent of the 5,582 participants viewed alcohol as heart-healthy, 39 percent viewed it as unhealthy, and 31 percent were unsure. The vast majority of those reporting alcohol as heart-healthy (80 percent) cited lay press as a source of their knowledge. Older age (odds ratio [OR], 1.11), higher education (OR, 1.37), higher income (OR, 1.07), U.S. residence (OR, 1.63), and [coronary artery disease](#) (OR, 1.51) were associated with perception of alcohol as heart-healthy, whereas ever smokers (OR, 0.76) and those with heart failure (OR, 0.5) were less likely to cite alcohol as heart-healthy. On average, those perceiving alcohol as heart-healthy consumed 47 percent more alcohol on a regular basis than those who viewed alcohol as unhealthy.

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