Myth of Moderate Alcohol Benefits Debunked, and How Science Gets Corrupted

We've all heard many times that a glass of wine a day is good for you. Improbable, considering what alcohol does to the gut, but study after study seemed to verify alcohol's heart-health benefits. The only problem was that the studies never actually said that moderate alcohol consumption is healthy. In fact, most studies simply pointed to potential benefits of red wine, and the studies were flawed in many ways, but the news ran with the idea that a regular drink is good for us because this is what most of us wanted to believe.

How Industry Corrupts Science

One recent study was attempting to lay the doubts to rest and confirm that a drink or two a day was, in fact, beneficial to our health. The problem is that this study was funded by the alcohol industry.

One of the many problems with previous alcohol studies is that if you compare a group of people who only drink a moderate amount to people who don't drink you're comparing people with restraint to people who may or may not have restraint with other lifestyle choices. A person who only has one glass of wine a day is likely going to have more willpower than the average person. For instance, maybe many members of the non-drinking control group don't like alcohol but instead smokes and eats junk food all day.

A proper study on the effects of alcohol would randomly assign one group of people to drink a moderate amount while they assign another group of people to abstain. This is tough to do with a large enough control group, but in 2013 the National

Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), set out to do just that. The *Moderate Alcohol and Cardiovascular Health* study was poised to be a breakthrough in public health. The 10-year, $100 million government trial is now underway.

The NIH is said to be one of the world's foremost medical research centers. it's a federal agency that invests more than $30 billion of taxpayer money into health research yearly. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism is an agency under NIH that oversees the alcohol industry.

The idea is to pay thousands of people to drink in four continents. This amounted to 3,500 daily drinks for six years. The math proved to be incredibly expensive. NIH decided to rely on the alcohol industry to foot the bill. In October of 2017 Wired reported that,

> *Five corporations—Anheuser-Busch InBev, Diageo, Pernod Ricard, Heineken, and Carlsberg—have since provided a total of $67 million. The foundation is seeking another $23 million, according to its director of development, Julie Wolf-Rodda."*

In May of 2018, The New York Times published a scathing report that showed the NIH's ties to the alcohol industry. The article opens with:

> *It was going to be a study that could change the American diet, a huge clinical trial that might well deliver all the medical evidence needed to recommend a daily alcoholic drink as part of a healthy lifestyle.*
>
> *That was how two prominent scientists and a senior federal health official pitched the project during a presentation at the luxurious Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, Fla., in 2014. And the audience members who were being asked to help pay for the $100 million study seemed receptive: They were all liquor*

> *company executives.*

The Times article reported that documents and interviews proved that the NIH courted the alcohol industry with a plan to endorse moderate drinking as healthy. The alcohol industry previewed the trial design and was allowed to vet the researchers.

Besides the industry influence, two other major problems with the study include the fact that the study is too short to see increases in cancers and other health issues that could be linked to alcohol consumption and too many people are excluded from the study. People are not allowed to partake in the study if they have never had a drink or have a history of addiction, psychiatric care, liver problems, kidney problems, and certain cancers.

> *You're picking off the people who are most likely to have the harms." – Dr. Richard Saitz, chair of the Department of Community Health Sciences at Boston University*

Incidentally, research has shown that alcohol consumption in any amount increases the risk of breast cancer.

A month after the Times article was published Stat News published an article titled, *NIH rejected a study of alcohol advertising while pursuing industry funding for other research*.

> *…at the 2015 meeting the director, George Koob, would leap out of his seat and scream at the scientists after their PowerPoint presentation on research the agency had eagerly funded on the association between alcohol marketing and underage drinking. 'I don't fucking care!' Koob yelled, referring to alcohol advertising, according to the scientists.*

Fortunately, thanks to all of the journalist reporting on this corrupt clinical trial, NIH terminated it last June.

A New Study Not Funded By Big Alcohol

It may not be wise to put any credence into a vaccination study funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, but they aren't tied to the alcohol industry. The Lancet has just published a study stating that all alcohol consumption is a health risk, moderate or not.

The Global Burden of Disease study looked at alcohol consumption in 195 countries between 1990 and 2016 and analyzed data or people ranging in age from 15 to 95. Researchers compared people who completely abstained from alcohol to those who had one alcoholic drink per day and to people who drank more.

With the non-drinking group, 914 people out of 100,000 developed an alcohol-related health problem such as cancer or suffered an injury. An extra four people would suffer an alcohol-related health problem or injury if they drank one alcoholic drink a day.

For people who had two alcoholic drinks a day, 63 more developed a condition within a year and for those who consumed five drinks every day, there was an increase of 338 people, who developed a health problem. Two alcoholic drinks a day equated to 63 more people developing a health condition, and five drinks every day increased the number of people who developed a health problem to 338.

The study reports:

> *Alcohol use is a leading risk factor for global disease burden and causes substantial health loss. We found that the risk of all-cause mortality, and of cancers specifically,*

> *rises with increasing levels of consumption, and the level of consumption that minimises health loss is zero.”*

To an individual, the one drink a day idea doesn’t look like much statistically but keep in mind, the study is looking at one year. It’s taking into account people’s drinking habits and health within one year’s time. This does not represent the likelihood that one may be diagnosed with cancer after drinking a glass of wine every day for a decade. It’s near certain that the longer one drinks regularly the greater the risk of adverse health effects. In addition, Prof Sonia Saxena points out that while, “One drink a day does represent a small increased risk but adjust that to the UK population as a whole and it represents a far bigger number, and most people are not drinking just one drink a day.”

Conclusion

Alcohol has a few health benefits, but this doesn’t make it healthy. Every health benefit alcohol can provide is better achieved through diet and exercise. To put it bluntly, nobody who suffers from chronic disease can get well while consuming alcohol.

Our biggest concern with alcohol consumption is that it severely disrupts the gut flora. Beneficial bacteria gets killed and washed away, as well as pathogenic microbes, but guess what gets left behind. Yeast. It’s incredibly difficult to kill Candida spores. Alcohol irritates the gut lining and harms the healthy gut microbiome. Then it raises blood sugar, and Candida is left to flourish in its wake. For more on how this works, check out *Best Supplements To Kill Candida and Everything Else You Ever Wanted To Know About Fungal Infections.*