

Regular alcohol consumption is associated with increasing quality of life and mood in older men and women: the Rancho Bernardo Study

OBJECTIVE: This study examines the sex-specific association between alcohol intake and health-related quality of life in middle class community-dwelling older adults. **METHODS:** Information on alcohol intake and measures of quality of life were obtained from 1594 participants (n=633 men, n=961 women) aged 50-97 years during a research clinic visit in 1992-1996, and from their responses to a phone interview and mailed questionnaires. Quality of life measures included the Medical Outcome Study Short Form 36 (SF-36), Quality of Well-Being (QWB) Scale, Life Satisfaction Index-Z (LSI-Z), and Satisfaction with Life Survey (SWLS). Depressed mood was assessed using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). Men and women were stratified into four groups of reported alcohol intake: non-drinker, occasional drinker (alcohol <3 times/week), light regular drinker (alcohol intake ≥ 3 times/week, but <170g/week), and moderate regular drinker (alcohol intake ≥ 3 times/week and ≥ 170 g/week). **RESULTS:** Average age of both sexes was 72 \pm 10 years. Only 11% of the men and 17% of the women were non-drinkers; 54% of men and 40% of women reported drinking alcohol ≥ 3 times per week; 18% of men and 7.5% of women were heavier regular drinkers. In multivariable regression analyses, increasing frequency of alcohol use was positively associated with better quality of life in men and in women. Associations were not explained by age, physical activity, smoking, depressed mood, or common chronic diseases including diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease. **CONCLUSIONS:** Regular alcohol consumption is associated with increased quality of life in older men and women.

Chan AM, von Mühlen D, Kritz-Silverstein D, Barrett-Connor E. *Maturitas*. 2009 Mar 20;62(3):294-300.

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