

Dear Sirs

When I last looked at the evidence for the "J"-shaped curve linking alcohol consumption and ischaemic heart disease events, the following points applied:

The benefit from taking alcohol applies only to post-menopausal women and to men after their early forties. There are no health benefits for younger people.

The benefit is obtained from taking one unit of alcohol daily.

If one takes two units daily, one is in the same position (re ischaemic heart disease) as someone taking no alcohol at all.

If one takes three units daily, one's risk is higher than in people taking either two units or no units daily.

As intake increases above two units daily, risk progressively increases.

There is no beneficial effect with regard to any other diseases from consuming alcohol, only harmful effects.

Dr Anne Travers
Retired NHS consultant public health physician