

Red wine may reduce risk of prostate cancer: study

11:50 AM Wednesday May 23, 2007



Photo / Reuters

NEW YORK- Red wine drinkers, raise your glasses! Another study extolling the health benefits of red wine was released on Tuesday, saying a glass a day may help prevent prostate cancer.

Researchers from Seattle's Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center found men who drink four to seven glasses of red wine a week are only 52 per cent as likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer as those who don't drink red wine.

The report, published in the June 2007 issue of *Harvard Men's Health Watch*, was based on a small study examining the risk of prostate cancer in 1,456 men aged between 40 and 64, including alcohol consumption.

"At first the results for alcohol consumption seemed similar to the findings of many earlier studies -- there was no relationship between overall consumption and risk," said the researchers in a statement.

"But the scientists went one step further by evaluating each type of alcoholic beverage independently. Here the news was surprising -- wine drinking was linked to a reduced risk of prostate cancer."

Article continues below

When white wine was compared with red, red had the most benefit with even low amounts appearing to help.

But by contrast men who were heavy beer drinkers, consuming 35 or more a week for eight

years or longer, were at greater risk of contracting prostate cancer.

The results also confirmed other studies' findings with the risk of prostate cancer higher for men with a family history of the disease, who were obese, smokers or African American.

The researchers speculated that the reason was chemical and could be linked to various flavonoids and resveratrol that were missing from other alcoholic beverages.

"These components have antioxidant properties, and some appear to counterbalance androgens, the male hormones that stimulate the prostate," the report said, adding this was a small study so too early to endorse red wine for the prostate.

But the study follows a string of research finding drinking wine in moderation can have health benefits.

A Dutch study released in February found drinking a small amount of wine can extend men's life expectancy by a few years while a US study last year found red wine could help protect the brain from damage after a stroke.

Many doctors, however, are unwilling to recommend drinking alcohol for health, fearing patients might assume that if a little is good then a lot might be better.

- REUTERS