

Regular alcohol consumption elevates blood pressure in pre-menopausal women

Regular consumption of alcohol elevates 24-hour blood pressure levels in pre-menopausal women (Mori TA, Burke V, Beilin LJ, et al. *Hypertension* 2015; 66:00-00. DOI: 10.1161/HYPERTENSIONAHA.115.05773). An Australian study investigated the effect of different levels of alcohol consumption on 24-hour systolic and diastolic blood pressure in women without high blood pressure (mean blood pressure of 110/69 mm Hg). Twenty-four women aged between 25 to 49 years of age were randomised to a cross-over study where they drank higher volume red wine (146-218 g alcohol/week), lower volume red wine (42-73 g alcohol/week) or de-alcoholised red wine, each for a period of 4 weeks. Higher volume red wine consumption significantly increased 24-hour systolic and diastolic blood pressure relative to lower volume red wine and de-alcoholised red wine consumption, respectively (all $p < 0.05$). The magnitude of the increase in blood pressure (by 1-2 mm Hg) with higher volume consumption was similar to that previously reported for men. Lower levels of alcohol intake did not lower blood pressure compared to de-alcoholised wine consumption. This study demonstrates that regular consumption of 2 to 3 standard drinks per day (146-218 g alcohol/week) increases systolic and diastolic blood pressure in pre-menopausal women. Furthermore, the cardiovascular benefits of low levels of alcohol consumption may not be related to a reduction in blood pressure.