



Alcohol Thins Blood

Although, according to recent research, a few drinks a week can reduce the risk of developing heart disease, alcohol consumption, even in small quantities, has its disadvantages: alcohol contributes to blood thinning, thus increasing the risk of bleeding strokes.

The research team led by Dr. Kenneth Mukamal, from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, found that alcohol intake thins blood, which is, on one hand, beneficial, because it prevents clots, and on the other hand, risky, because it may increase bleeding strokes.

The contrasting effects of alcohol are similar to the effects of blood thinners like aspirin, which clearly prevent heart attacks but at the expense of some additional bleeding strokes **Dr. Kenneth Mukamal**

More than 3,000 people were evaluated in this study. They had taken part in the Framingham Offspring Study, begun in 1971, which investigated the risk factors for heart disease.

Researchers focused on platelets, the blood cells that are responsible for clotting, and evaluated their activation (how fast they start the clotting process) and their aggregation (stickiness; how much they clump together).

Dr. Kenneth Ault, director of the Research Institute at the Maine Medical Center in Portland and co-author of the study, says that in men, both activation and aggregation went down in moderate drinkers, while in women, only aggregation went down with moderate drinking. Moderate drinking is considered to be three to six drinks a week. Previous studies had reached the same conclusion - that moderate drinkers tend to have less sticky platelets, as compared to non-drinkers.

The study confirms previous findings - that moderate consumption of alcohol is protective for a lot of cardiovascular problems, but it also shows that alcohol has its downsides. The research results were

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