

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## International study confirms breast cancer link to low alcohol use

A newly published [study](#), from the University of Victoria's Centre for Addictions Research of BC (CARBC) and co-authored by Curtin University's National Drug Research Institute in Perth, confirms that moderate drinkers have an increased risk of breast cancer.

The study shows that consuming an average of up to two drinks a day is associated with an 8.5 per cent increase in the risk, compared to abstaining from alcohol.

Previous research investigating the relationship between low-dose alcohol use and breast cancer has sometimes produced conflicting results. Some studies found no increased risk for low-dose or "moderate" drinking. According to [international studies](#), 5 to 10 per cent of breast cancer deaths are attributable to alcohol.

This new study, co-authored by CARBC director Tim Stockwell, former associate researcher with CARBC Cornelia Zeisser, and Tanya Chikritzhs of the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University in Australia and published in [Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research](#), analysed 60 studies done before 2013.

Of those 60, only six were free of potentially serious biases: many because former drinkers were misclassified as abstainers, while other studies misclassified occasional drinkers as abstainers. This last bias in particular resulted in an underestimation of the risk of disease, the study shows.

When corrected for these biases, the findings confirmed a significantly increased risk for breast cancer from low-dose consumption.

"These results should encourage caution with alcohol consumption," Professor Chikritzhs says.

"Drinking within low-risk drinking guidelines is associated with a very small increase in risk of breast cancer as well as of some other cancers. In general, less drinking means less risk to health."

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**Note:** Infographic available for download [here](#).

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