

## Alcohol and High Blood Pressure, Fact or Fantasy

Alcohol and High Blood Pressure, wow, this is a good one (he says putting down his pint, only joking). Consuming Alcohol and High Blood Pressure as an issue is a real conundrum.

One the one had, the odd wee drink now and then (he says picking his pint glass up again) is actually quite beneficial and can act as an aid and part treatment for cardiovascular purposes but it is like everything, taken to excess, therein lies the downfall.

The relationship between Alcohol and High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) has been recognised for nearly a century and especially the link between Hypertension and the excessive consumption of alcohol i.e. more than just the correct recommended intake of a few units (14 for women and 21 for men) a week.

There have been several scientific studies over the last 100 years that have confirmed that Alcoholism is ONE of several causes of Hypertension. Originally it was suggested that alcoholism was a cause of hypertension irrespective of a whole range of other associated socio economic factors such as economic status, your age, race, weight, serum cholesterol levels or even tobacco use

If you drink excessively, your blood pressure will rise.

Hmmnnn. It is quite a sobering experience when you look at it like that does it not?

The Pros and Cons of drinking are not for this article and it is not for me to make valued pronouncements about the virtues of abstinence from alcohol but the simple fact is inescapable. Alcohol is a drug. It affects the way you feel and affects every system in your body.

When you know the facts and effects of alcohol, then you will be in a position to decide what is best in the long term for you.

In a nutshell the principle behind the relationship between alcoholism and High Blood Pressure lies in the following basic premise.

When Alcohol is present in the blood stream it covers the blood vessels and artery walls thereby increasing their tension and thereby increasing the blood pressure. This is the basic version and there are more complex definitions and explanations in existence but these are for the Medical Textbooks!

As in all things moderation appears to be the key and this arises (apart from common sense) largely from a report in 1994 in The Journal of the American Medical Association which published an editorial that suggested that if the entire population of the United States stopped drinking it estimated that there could be up to an additional 81,000 deaths due to Heart Disease each year.

OK, sounds interesting, and the article went on to ascertain that abstaining from alcohol may be no better than drinking in moderation.

At the same time over in Europe, researchers in Denmark were putting the final touches to a study that analysed the drinking habits of thirteen thousand people over the period of a decade. To everyones amazement the study found that those who downed three to five glasses of wine daily had roughly half the risk of teetotallers dying.

At this point enter the Harvard School of Public Health who stated that their research had shown that the benefits of alcohol consumption (i.e. the enlargement of the blood vessels) disappear after as little as two drinks. It would appear that the generally accepted consensus is that moderation in drinking rules. Consuming one or two drinks a day helps prevent heart attacks and stroke it would seem.

The really sad thing about all of this is that most Medical Professionals will tell you that the abuse of alcohol is one of the fastest growing areas of treatment within the Healthcare system of today. Not only that but the fastest growing section of the population found to be most at risk from the effects of this abuse of alcohol are now under the age of thirty and sadly an alarmingly large percentage of these sufferers are female.

Shame they never told us about that at school.

Or perhaps they did, but we were just too young and stupid to listen.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

#### About the Author

Stephen Morgan is a freelance journalist who also suffers from High Blood Pressure. He launched the site Living with High Blood Pressure (<http://www.livingwithhighbloodpressure.net>) along with its sister site High Blood Pressure (<http://www.highbloodpressure.name>)