# Internet news

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SAVE

# Alcohol intake may lower stress-related brain activity, helping the heart

By Regina Schaffer

Fact checked by Richard Smith

+ Source/Disclosures

**Key takeaways:**

- Light to moderate alcohol consumption associates with significant reductions in major adverse CV event risk, mediated by neural activity.
- The researchers said there is no safe amount of alcohol consumption.

Ahmed Tawakol

For the analysis of the relationship between alcohol consumption and major adverse CV events, the researchers included 53,064 participants from the Mass General Brigham Biobank, established in 2010, who completed an optional health survey with information on alcohol consumption during the year before enrollment. The median age of participants was 60 years and 60% were women. Researchers classified alcohol consumption for both men and women as non/minimal, defined as less than one drink per week; light/moderate, defined as one to 14 drinks per week; and high, defined as more than 14 drinks per week.

Within the cohort, 23,920 were minimal drinkers; 27,053 were light/moderate drinkers and 2,091 participants were heavy drinkers. During median follow-up of 3.4 years, 1,914 participants experienced a major adverse CV event.

Compared with no or little alcohol intake (< 1 drink per week), moderate alcohol intake (1-14 drinks per week) was associated with reduced risk for major adverse CV events after adjustment for demographic factors, CVD risk factors, health behaviors, socioeconomic factors and psychological factors (OR = 0.786; 95% CI, 0.717-0.862; $P <$ .0001).

**Potential adverse effects with drinking**

The researchers said despite the findings that light to moderate alcohol consumption may improve CV risk, this benefit must be carefully weighed against its potential adverse impacts on other noncardiac disease processes, such as malignancy, dependence and alcohol abuse.

Compared with little or no alcohol intake, light to moderate drinking was associated with a 23% increased risk for cancer during follow-up, with an HR of 1.23 (95% CI, 1.14-1.33; $P < .0001$).

"At the same quantities of alcohol that was saw a relative risk reduction in CVD, we saw an increase in cancer," Tawakol told Healio. "While we identified what might be an important mechanism by which alcohol might introduce benefits for CV health, alcohol's overall impact on health is not positive. There is no safe quantity of alcohol. What we would like to do is further focus on this pathway of the stress neural networks and identify better approaches that more safely reduce those signals and enhance and improve CV health without the detriments of alcohol."

Alcohol intake may lower stress-related brain activity, helping the heart (healio.com)

# WHO Advises Against Nonsugar Sweeteners for Weight Control

Aude Lecrubier
June 09, 2023

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Silver Spring, MD — A new guideline from the World Health Organization (WHO) on nonsugar sweeteners (NSSs) recommends not using them to control weight or reduce the risk for diabetes, heart disease, or cancer. These sweeteners include aspartame, acesulfame K, advantame, saccharine, sucralose, stevia, and stevia derivatives.

The recommendation is based on the findings of a systematic review that collected data from 283 studies in adults, children, pregnant women, and mixed populations.

The findings suggest that use of NSSs does not confer any long-term benefit in reducing body fat in adults or children. They also suggest that long-term use of NSSs may have potential undesirable effects.

To clarify, short-term NSS use results in a small reduction in body weight and body mass index in adults without significant effects on other measures of adiposity or cardiometabolic health, including fasting glucose, insulin, blood lipids, and blood pressure.

Conversely, on a long-term basis, results from prospective cohort studies suggest that higher NSS intake is associated with increased risk for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and all-cause mortality in adults (very low to low certainty evidence).

Regarding the risk for cancer, results from case-control studies suggest an association between saccharine intake and bladder cancer (very low certainty evidence), but significant associations for other types of cancer were not observed in case-control studies or meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies.

Relatively fewer studies were found for children, and results were largely inconclusive.

Finally, results for pregnant women suggest that higher NSS intake is associated with increased risk for preterm birth (low certainty evidence) and possibly adiposity in offspring (very low certainty evidence).

# Immediate Statin After Acute Stroke Reduces Disability

Liam Davenport
June 09, 2023

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MUNICH — Giving intensive statin therapy to patients with acute mild ischemic stroke or with high-risk for transient ischemic attack (TIA) immediately after onset significantly reduces the risk for a poor functional outcome compared with delaying treatment, without compromising safety, results of the INSPIRES trial show.

The study involved more than 6000 patients with acute mild ischemic stroke or TIA and intracranial or extracranial atherosclerosis (ICAS/ECAS), who were randomly assigned in a 2 x 2 factorial design to compare intensive vs standard antiplatelet therapy and intensive statin therapy within 24 hours vs waiting up to 72 hours after onset.

Intensive antiplatelet therapy with clopidogrel plus aspirin reduced the risk for recurrent stroke within 90 days by 21% vs standard single-agent therapy, although it also doubled the risk for moderate to severe bleeding.

Starting intensive statin therapy with atorvastatin within 24 hours of onset had no impact on recurrent stroke risk but did reduce the risk for a poor functional outcome vs waiting up to 72 hours by 16%.

Moreover, it was "safe, with no increased risk of bleeding, hepatotoxicity, or muscle toxicity," said study presenter Yilong Wang, MD, Department of Neurology, Beijing Tiantan Hospital, National Clinical Research Center, Beijing, China.

# Everything you need to know about berberine

Medically reviewed by Megan Soliman, MD — By Jennifer Berry — Updated on June 12, 2023

Benefits | Supplements | Vs. metformin | Side effects | Is it safe? | Summary

Berberine, or berberine hydrochloride, is a compound in several plants. There are many possible health benefits associated with berberine.

Berberine has been a part of Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years. It works in the body in multiple ways and is able to make changes within the body's cells.

A 2014 review suggests that berberine has a "harmonious distribution" into several targets in the body, which allows it to fight certain conditions while causing minimal side effects.

Many studies of berberine have indicated that it can treat several metabolic health conditions, including diabetes, obesity, and heart problems. It may also improve gut health.

Although berberine appears to be safe and cause few side effects, a person should speak with a doctor before taking it.

## Bacterial infections

Berberine could be an effective antimicrobial agent. A 2016 laboratory study found that berberine helped inhibit the growth of *Staphylococcus aureus*.

*S. aureus* can cause many health problems, including:

- sepsis
- pneumonia
- meningitis
- a range of skin conditions

## Inflammation

Inflammation is a key factor in several health conditions, including heart disease and diabetes.

Some 2014 research suggests that berberine has anti-inflammatory properties, which means it could help treat diabetes and other inflammation-related health conditions.

## Diabetes

Research has shown that berberine may work as a diabetes treatment. Studies have found that it can have positive effects on:

- blood sugar
- triglycerides
- insulin

One literature review indicated that berberine was better than a placebo at lowering blood sugar.

The same analysis found that a combination of berberine and blood-sugar-lowering drugs is more effective than the drugs alone.

## High cholesterol

High levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and triglycerides may increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Some evidence suggests that berberine could help lower LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels. According to one review, studies in both animals and humans indicate that berberine has cholesterol-lowering effects.

It may help reduce LDL, or "bad," cholesterol and increase high-density lipoprotein, or "good," cholesterol.

A literature review found that berberine combined with lifestyle changes works better than lifestyle changes alone in treating high cholesterol.

## High blood pressure

High blood pressure is a leading cause of heart disease.

A literature review found that berberine combined with a blood-pressure-lowering drug was more effective than the drug alone.

Also, results of a study of rats indicate that berberine could delay the onset of high blood pressure and, when it does develop, help reduce its severity.

## Obesity

Obesity is a common condition that can increase the risk of:

- type 2 diabetes
- heart disease
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol

One review reported that people who took 750 milligrams (mg) of barberry twice a day for 3 months had a significant decrease in weight. Barberry is a plant that contains high amounts of berberine.

## Polycystic ovary syndrome

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) occurs when a female has high levels of certain male hormones. The syndrome is a hormonal and metabolic imbalance that can lead to infertility and other health issues.

PCOS is linked with many issues that berberine may help address. For example, a person with PCOS may also have:

- high levels of insulin, diabetes, or both
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- more body weight

## Cancer

Berberine can create changes within the molecules of cells, and this could have another potential benefit: fighting cancer.

One review found that berberine has "clear inhibitory effects" on the following cancers:

- colorectal cancer
- lung cancer
- ovarian cancer
- prostate cancer
- liver cancer
- cervical cancer

## Gut health

If berberine can help treat cancer, inflammation, diabetes, and other conditions, it may be because of a beneficial effect on gut microbiota, according to some research published in 2020. Scientists have found links between the gut microbiome — colonies of bacteria in the gut — and these conditions.

Berberine has an antibacterial action that seems to remove the harmful bacteria in the gut, and thus enhance the growth of healthy bacteria.

While studies in humans and rodents have suggested this could be true, scientists caution that more research is needed to confirm how berberine affects humans and whether it is safe to use.

## Supplements

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) notes that berberine supplements are available as supplements or capsules.

They add that many studies suggest taking 900–1,500 mg per day, but most people take 500 mg three times per day. However, the AANP urges people to speak with a doctor before taking berberine to check that it is safe to use and how much they can take.

If a doctor agrees that berberine is safe to use, the AANP says people should also check the product label for third-party certification, for example, from the National Science Foundation (NSF) or NSF International.

## Side effects

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) notes that if adults take goldenseal, which contains berberine, by mouth it is unlikely to cause severe adverse effects in the short term. However, there is not enough information to show that long-term use is safe.

Berberine can cause digestive side effects, such as:

- upset stomach
- constipation
- nausea

It can also cause a rash or headache in some people.

ADVERTISEMENT

# Low-dose atropine eyedrops may delay onset of nearsightedness in children

By Beth JoJack on June 2, 2023 — Fact checked by Jill Seladi-Schulman, Ph.D.

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The first recruited participant began treatment in the trial in July 2017 and the last participant enrolled in June 2020. The final follow-up session was held in June 2022.

The researchers recruited children between the ages of 4 and 9 with cycloplegic spherical equivalent between +1.00 and 0.00 D, astigmatism of less than -1.00 D. Participants needed to have at least one parent with myopia.

The trial excluded children for several reasons, including if the child had an ocular disease and if the child had already been treated for myopia management.

Ultimately, 474 children received eyedrops nightly in both eyes over a two-year period.

One group received eye drops consisting of .05% atropine. Another received eye drops consisting of .01% atropine. The third group received placebo drops.

Family members of each participant kept a diary of when the child received eyedrops. Participants who used the drops a mean of 5.25 days a week over the two years were described as having good adherence.

Over the course of the two-year follow up period, 121 participants dropped out for reasons that included no longer wanting to use eyedrops or refusal to attend follow-up exams. Overall, dropout rates were similar among the three groups of participants.

Photophobia, or sensitivity to bright light, was the most common adverse effect reported by families of participants. This was reported by 15 participants in the group that received .05% atropine drops, by 23 participants in the group that received .01% atropine drops, and by 14 participants in the placebo group.

## Delayed onset of myopia

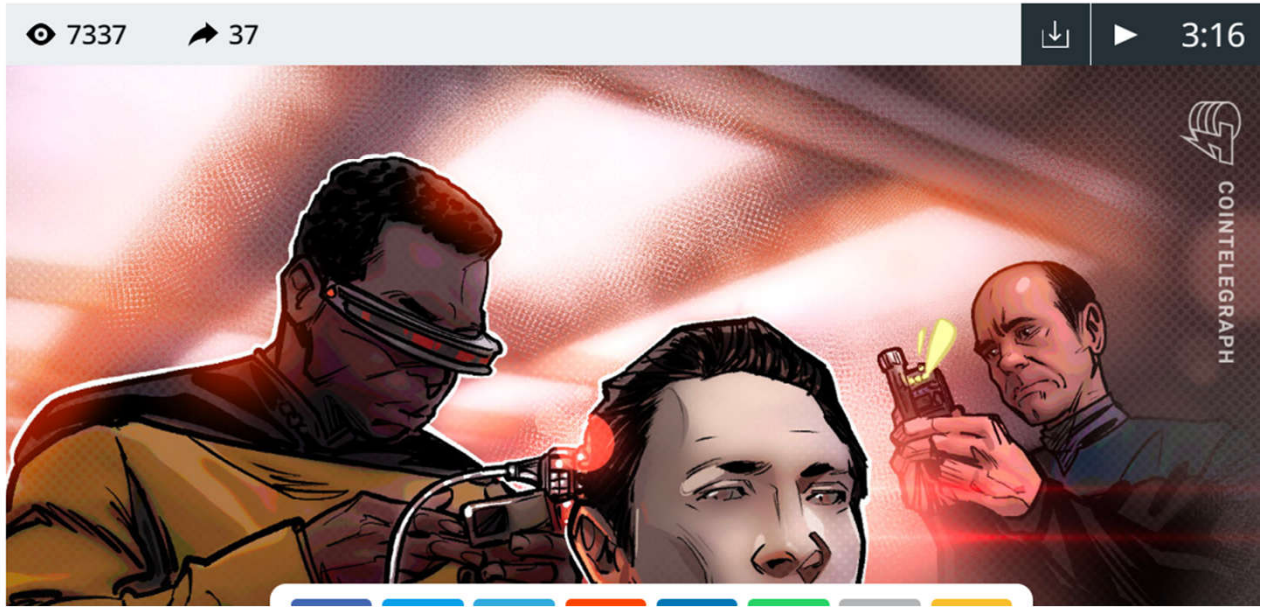
After two years, the cumulative incidence of myopia was 28% in the group of children that received .05% atropine drops, nearly 46% in the group that received .01% atropine drops and 53% for the placebo group.

The group that received .05% atropine drops had significantly lower cumulative myopia incidence than the placebo group and the group receiving .01% atropine drops.

The percentage of participants who experienced aquick increase in the degree of nearsightedness after two years were 25% for the .05% atropine group, 45% for the .01% atropine group and nearly 54% for the placebo group.

## Neuralink gets FDA approval for ‘in-human’ trials of its brain-computer interface

The Neuralink device is designed to be surgically implanted and, according to CEO Elon Musk, will eventually be marketed to the general public.




https://youtu.be/laWVyG6Y0mw

Chân thành cảm ơn!