

Red Wine May Reduce Prostate Cancer Risk

Men who drink red wine regularly may be cutting their risk of prostate cancer, according to new research published in *The International Journal of Cancer*. And they fare better than men who drink mainly beer or liquor, which do not appear to provide the same protection.

“We found that men who consumed four or more glasses of red wine per week reduced their risk of prostate cancer by [around] 50 percent,” said lead author Janet Stanford, from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle.

Red wine has high concentrations of polyphenols, which other research has shown might help fight cancer, while beer and spirits have low levels of these naturally occurring compounds.

The researchers compared data from 753 prostate cancer patients and 703 cancer-free men, ages 40 to 64 and from the Seattle area. The volunteers provided information on their diets, drinking patterns, family history of cancer and other factors.

After adjusting for all factors, the researchers

found that people who drank beer and liquor in light (one to seven drinks per week) to moderate (eight to 14 per week) amounts had a risk for prostate cancer similar to nondrinkers’.

Wine, however, showed a protective effect. (A glass

of wine was defined as 4 ounces.)

Moderate wine-drinkers benefited the most, with a 44 percent lower risk of developing prostate cancer, while light drinkers had a 27 percent lower risk. Also, heavy wine-drinkers (15 or more per week) showed a 37 percent lower risk.

The scientists then broke down the results by preference for red wine versus white wine and by the severity of the cancers. Drinking

four or more glasses of red wine a week was linked to a lower risk of all prostate cancers; the biggest benefit was seen for the “more aggressive” types of cancer. But there were no consistent patterns of risk associated with white wine. Stanford said the number of white-wine drinkers may have been too small.

—Jacob Gaffney

