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ALCOHOL AND COGNITION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Introduction: Presently, there is huge body of data, concerning the effect of alcohol use on cognitive functions. Some epidemiological data suggest that low to moderate alcohol dose might have positive effects on cognition. However, others contradict this finding. This paper reviews recent data on the effect of alcohol use (dose-dependent effect) on cognition at varying age limit.

Methods: Peer reviewed publications on the effect of alcohol use on cognitive function from Elsevier and Pubmed from the year 1940 to July, 2009 were critically examined.

Result/ Discussion: The benefits of alcohol on cognition lie on the positive effect of moderate alcohol use on the cardiovascular system. The majority of data shows that moderate alcohol use (up to 1-2 drinks/day) is associated with better cognitive functions (by decreasing the rate of dementia and depression), especially in old adults (≥ 55 years). Although very few data suggest that alcohol use by young adults and middle aged people, these studies did not find significant link between alcohol use and cognition. Consumption of 1-2 drinks (with 2 alcohol free days) might be associated with better cognition, especially among women (≥ 30 years). Men might be at a higher risk of cognitive functions disorders, even at moderate alcohol use. Diet, smoking, environmental factors are determinants of the effect of moderate alcohol use on cognitive functions.

References

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