

No such thing as safe alcohol consumption, study says

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You might want to remember this during your next visit to a bar.

A new study from the University of Oxford concluded that drinking alcohol had affected the brain's gray matter area, "important bits where information is processed," according to the study's lead author, Anya Topiwala.

The study delved into the relationship between [alcohol intake](#) of nearly 25,000 United Kingdom residents, and their brain using brain scans.

"The more people drank, the less the volume of their gray matter," Topiwala said to CNN. "Brain volume reduces with age and more severely with dementia. Smaller brain volume also predicts worse performance on memory testing."

The most intriguing part of the study's conclusion was that consumption of any type of alcohol was worse than not drinking it all.

"So many people drink 'moderately,' and think this either harmless or even protective," Topiwala said.

"As we have yet to find a 'cure' for [neurodegenerative diseases](#) like dementia, knowing about factors that can prevent brain harm is important for [public health](#)."

In 2016, alcohol was the No. 1 rise factor for disease and death for both men and women between the ages of 15 and 49. Nearly 10% of all global deaths were attributed to alcohol according to a 2018 study in *The Lancet*.

"While we can't yet say for sure whether there is 'no safe level' of alcohol regarding brain health at the moment, it has been known for decades that [heavy drinking](#) is bad for brain health," Sadie Boniface, head of research at the UK's Institute of Alcohol Studies, told CNN.

"We also shouldn't forget [alcohol](#) affects all parts of the body and there are multiple [health risks](#)," added Boniface.

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