

Red Wine May Cut Heart Disease Risk in Obese: Study

Tue Jul 30, 5:35 PM ET

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - While it is well established that obese people have a greater risk of developing heart disease, a new report suggests that this risk may be offset, at least in part, by consuming moderate amounts of red wine.

In their study, Dr. J. B. Dixon and colleagues of Alfred Hospital in Melbourne, Australia, found that obese people who consumed moderate amounts of red wine had lower levels of a blood protein called homocysteine.

High levels of homocysteine have been linked to an increase in cardiovascular disease risk, so keeping homocysteine levels under control may cut heart disease risk, the report indicates.

In the study, Dixon's team measured blood levels of homocysteine in 350 obese men and women, and interviewed them about their alcohol consumption habits. The findings are published in the July issue of the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

According to the investigators, red wine consumers had blood homocysteine concentrations that were 17% lower than those consuming no alcohol and 13% lower than individuals who reported primarily drinking beer or spirits.

The slightly lower homocysteine levels were seen in people consuming less than 100 grams of wine per week, which is roughly equivalent to six to eight 5-ounce glasses of wine.

Mild to moderate red wine consumption in obese individuals is associated with lower homocysteine concentrations, the authors conclude, and this may reduce their cardiovascular risk.

SOURCE: European Journal of Clinical Nutrition 2002;56:608-614.