**Ready to kick the butt? It may help you reduce drinking too**

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LONDON: Quitting smoking comes with another bonus: less drinking. According to researchers, people who have recently begun an attempt to quit smoking are more likely to try to drink less alcohol than other smokers.   
  
In England, people who attempted to stop smoking within the last week and reported lower levels of alcohol consumption, were less likely to binge drink, and were more likely to be classified as "light drinkers" (having a low alcohol risk) compared with those who did not attempt to stop smoking.

"These results go against the commonly held view that people who stop smoking tend to drink more to compensate. It's possible that they are heeding advice to try to avoid alcohol because of its link to relapse," said lead study author Jamie Brown from the University College London. 

Previous research has shown that tobacco dependence and alcohol consumption are closely related.   
  
The study involved household surveys, where a total of 6,287 out of 31,878 people reported smoking between March 2014 and September 2015. 

Of these, 144 had begun an attempt to quit smoking in the week before the survey.   
  
"It may be that smokers choose to restrict their alcohol consumption when attempting to quit smoking to reduce the chance of relapse," the study noted. 

Alternatively, it could be that people who drink less are more likely to quit smoking. If this is the case, smokers with higher alcohol consumption may need further encouragement to quit smoking.   
  
"We can't yet determine the direction of causality. Further research is needed to disentangle whether attempts to quit smoking precede attempts to restrict alcohol consumption or vice versa," Brown added in a paper published in the journal BMC Public Health. 

"We'd also need to rule out other factors which make both more likely. Such as the diagnosis of a health problem causing attempts to cut down on both drinking and smoking," he said. 