**How quitting smoking can be good for your LIVER: Those who have given up cigarettes 'drink less alcohol too'**

* **Smokers trying to quit were found to drink less alcohol in their first week**
* **They were also less inclined to binge drink than those who still smoked**
* **Experts: Goes against belief that ex-smokers drink more to compensate**
* **Drinking is linked with smoking so ex-smokers are told to avoid the pub**

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If you're trying to quit smoking to boost your health, there might be an added benefit.

Smokers trying to kick the habit tend to give up drinking as well, a new study has found.

Ex-smokers not only drank less in the first week of stubbing out, they were less inclined to binge drink.

They were more likely to be classified as 'light drinkers' - drinking within government regulations - compared with those who were not attempting to stop smoking.

Experts said this goes against the belief that people who have quit start drinking more as a result.

Lead author Jamie Brown, from University College London, England, said: '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.'

Previous research has shown that smoking and drinking are linked - people associate lighting up with having a pint.

As a result those trying to quit smoking are often advised to drink less at the same time.

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.

They had also completed a validated questionnaire called the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test.

Researchers classified the smokers as light or heavy drinkers - and analysed their current attempt to cut down on alcohol.

They then looked at their recent attempt to stop smoking.

Dr Brown said: 'This study found that smokers who reported attempting to stop within the last week had lower levels of alcohol consumption, especially binging.'

They were less likely to be classified as high risk drinkers, compared with those who were not trying to give up tobacco.

Heavy-drinking smokers who had recently quit were also more likely to also report they were cutting down than smokers who were still lighting up.

The study also looked at the available literature on the close relationship between smoking and alcohol consumption.

Drinking alcohol is associated with a lapse - seeing newly-quit smokers going back to their old habits.

This is why smokers are advised to cut down on alcohol when trying to quit.

Dr Brown stressed this was an observational study and cannot say whether giving up smoking led to a reduction in drinking or vice versa.

He suggested smokers may choose to forgo that extra glass of wine or pint of beer when attempting to kick the habit, to boost their chances of being succesful.

Or, it could be that those who drink less are more likely to quit smoking.

If this is true, heavy drinkers may need to more encouragement than other groups to stub out their cigarettes.

While more money is spent on trying to cut smoking, future health campaigns could also target those who quit to cut down on their drinking too.

The study was published in the journal BMC Public Health.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3701603/How-quitting-smoking-good-LIVER-given-cigarettes-drink-alcohol-too.html#ixzz4KQsfvcTH>   
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