Saving lives with alcoholic liver disease through abstinence, now thatâ€™s a good idea!

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A study published in the March 2012 edition of the Journal of the American Medical Association has concluded that alcohol damage can be reduced by abstinence in high-risk drinking ages, but further information is needed.

According to the article, alcohol damage is rampant in high-risk drinking ages and effects can be reduced with abstinence. â€œAs the population ages,â€ wrote the study author, Christopher B. Riederer, M.D., â€œsmoking cessation rates may more than double. This as well as other lifestyle factors, such as quitting work, may further reduce the amount of alcohol used.â€

The cause of liver damage, though, is unclear. â€œFor perspective,â€ said Dr. Riederer, a hepatologist in a department of hepatology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University, â€œnearly 1 out of every 4 U.S. adults between the ages of 20 and 70 has a diagnosis of alcoholic hepatitis in their liver. Those aged 30 to 39 years represent nearly 1 out of every 2 adults with a diagnosis.â€

One particular study by Mark S. Marcus, M.D., also from the Department of Nephrology and Hepatology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, states, â€œPatients who develop alcohol-related liver damage in their lifetime have a 10 to 15-fold increased risk of developing cancer.â€

But, Dr. Riederer asked, â€œWhat do we know about the underlying cause of the liver damage?â€

Dr. Riederer and his colleagues determined that long-term alcohol consumption is directly linked to oxidative stress and inflammation.

â€œThe strategy of addressing alcohol-related liver damage is primarily genetic as well as environment based,â€ wrote the study authors. â€œThe environment in question is hazardous alcohol use. Genetics play a significant role. Maternal alcohol consumption and the consumption of [alcohol] beverages were associated with 6-fold and 8-fold increased risk of alcoholic liver disease in children. Children who start drinking at a young age are at higher risk. Young parents are at higher risk. Youngest children, especially daughters, develop alcohol-related liver disease at a high rate. The mortality due to alcoholic liver disease increases with an increase in the average age of mothers during pregnancy, especially among uneducated mothers in the United States. Men who consume large amounts of alcohol are more likely to develop alcoholic liver disease.â€

According to the study, consumption of alcohol in lower-risk age ranges has no significant relationship with developing alcohol-related liver disease. â€œNo significant evidence for disease-causing mechanism has been found among drinkers who served minimal or no alcohol,â€ wrote the study authors.

The study also recommends that physicians treating such patients should be attentive to the relationship between alcohol and inflammatory, oxidative, and cardiovascular diseases.

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