Clinical reviews

Our panel of GPs review recent research papers in their specialist areas that may influence the way you practise

Reviewers

Addiction
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Cardiovascular disease
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Diabetes
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Mental health
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Paediatrics
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Sexual health
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Smoking cessation
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Urology
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Cardiovascular disease

Sweetened drinks may increase risk of heart failure

Men who consumed two or more servings of sweetened drinks per day had a significantly higher risk of developing heart failure than those who did not drink these beverages, in a large population-based cohort study.

A cohort of 42,400 Swedish men aged between 45 and 79 were followed from 1998 through 2010. Sweetened beverage consumption was assessed by means of a food frequency questionnaire.

The participants answered the following question: 'How many soft drinks or sweetened juice drinks do you drink per day or per week?' Fruit juice was not included in the definition of sweetened beverages.

Incident events of heart failure were identified through linkage to the Swedish National Patient Register and the Cause of Death Register.

Over a mean follow-up of 11.7 years, 4,113 heart failure events were identified including 509 heart failure deaths.

The authors reported a positive association between sweetened beverage consumption and risk of heart failure after adjustment for other risk factors (P for trend < 0.001).

Men who consumed two or more servings of sweetened beverages per day had a 23% higher risk of developing heart failure HR 1.23 (95% CI: 1.12-1.35) compared with men who were non-consumers.

The prevalence of heart failure appears to be rising. Several factors have been associated with an increased risk of developing heart failure including age, sex, cardiometabolic risk factors such as insulin concentration, inflammatory markers, and blood pressure.

Sweetened beverage consumption has been associated with adverse changes in several of these risk factors including blood pressure, insulin, C-reactive protein levels as well as glucose levels and weight.

Soft drink consumption has also been associated with an increased risk of developing hypertension, metabolic syndrome, diabetes, coronary heart disease, and stroke.

The authors concluded that sweetened beverage consumption is associated with a higher risk of heart failure and that this could have implications for heart failure prevention strategies.

Prospective studies investigating the link between sweetened beverage consumption and heart failure are now required to investigate this association further.

DR PETER SAVILL

● **Rahman I, Wolk A, Larsson S. The relationship between sweetened beverage consumption and risk of heart failure in men. *Heart* 2015;101:1961-65**