# Excessive Hard Liquor Drinking Tied to Pancreatic Cancer

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Tossing back three or more shots of hard liquor every day is linked to an increased risk of death from pancreatic cancer, according to American Cancer Society study findings published in the Archives of Internal Medicine and reported by Reuters Health.

For the study, researchers used survey data from more than a million people, including more than 400,000 never-smokers. Starting in 1982, participants completed a questionnaire each year, reporting how many drinks they had each day (but not the alcohol quantity in the beverages).

Researchers found the risk of cancer death was 36 percent higher among heavy-drinking non-smokers. But what remained unclear was whether the type of drink and the quantity of alcohol in the beverage mattered, said Susan Gapstur, PhD, MPH, vice president of epidemiology at the American Cancer Society and the lead study researcher.

Scientists don't fully understand the specific ways in which alcohol is linked to the pancreatic cancer risk, but they said the culprit might be the pancreatic inflammation (a risk factor for pancreatic cancer) that's caused by long-term drinking.

"The major take-home message here is that these findings clearly further underscore the American Cancer Society's guidelines, which recommend that, if you drink alcoholic beverages, limit consumption to one drink per day if you're a woman and two drinks per day if you're a man," Gapstur said.

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