

**Tuesday, 29 June 2010**

### **RESEARCHERS RECOMMEND WEEKLY ALCOHOL FREE DAYS FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

New research published in the June edition of the scientific journal *Addiction* recommends the health benefits of adopting alcohol free days every week.

“This study delivers an important finding for older people,” says lead author and Associate Professor Kieran McCaul from the Western Australian Centre for Health and Ageing.

“We found that moderate consumption of alcohol – one or two standard drinks per day – was associated with a reduced risk of mortality, but we also found that having one or two alcohol-free days every week reduced this risk further.”

“This is an important finding, particularly for older men, because we found that about 40% of the men in our study reported drinking alcohol every day compared with only 10% of women. So we would suggest that older people who drink alcohol will gain the most health benefits by moderate consumption and having one or two alcohol-free days a week.”

Current Australian guidelines recommend no more than two standard drinks of alcohol on any day for healthy men and women.\*

“It is important to understand what a standard drink is? It’s 10ml of alcohol, equivalent to a can of mid-strength beer. A bottle of wine is roughly eight standard drinks,” says Associate Professor McCaul.

The study looked at the data from two different studies of healthy, community dwelling men and women over 65 years old and followed their health for a ten year period.

Other members of the research team included; Leon Flicker, Osvaldo Almeida, Konrad Jamrozik, Graeme Hankey and Julie Byles.

This work was supported by funding from National Health and Medical Research Council.

\* 2009 Australian Guidelines to reduce health risks from Drinking Alcohol, National Health and Medical Research Council.