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Sweetened drinks linked to increased heart failure risk

November 3, 2015 By Amely White — Leave a Comment

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Researchers gathered the data using a questionnaire, and did not consider tea, coffee or juice, limiting consideration to specifically those with sugar or artificial sweeteners added.

The researchers asked more than 42,000 men in Sweden about their consumption of 96 food and drink items over the previous year.

Over the course of the study, there were about 3,600 new cases of heart failure. The prevalence of the

condition is rising due at least in part to consumption of sodas and other sweetened beverages, Larsson and colleagues note in the journal *Heart*. To rule out reverse causation, Larsson and colleagues also performed an analysis excluding all men diagnosed with *heart* failure during the first 5 years of monitoring.

Heart failure affects more than half a million people in the United Kingdom and only around half of those diagnosed with it are still alive five years later.

Soft drinks have been associated with an increased risk in high blood pressure and *heart* disease, so it makes sense that sweetened beverages might also increase the risk of heart failure, the researchers said. “*Heart* failure does not develop overnight – it’s a progressive disease that starts slowly and gets worse over time”.

The researchers acknowledged that the study only involved older men so the findings may not apply to younger people or women.

“Sweetened beverages lead to weight gain and obesity and this leads to diabetes and *heart* failure”, Martinez-Gonzalez told Reuters Health by email.

The findings were published online November 2 in the journal *Heart*.

“Our study findings suggest that *sweetened beverage consumption could contribute to heart failure development*“, they wrote.

Francesco Cappuccio, professor of cardiovascular medicine at the University of Warwick, said there were limitations to the study.

When your *heart* isn’t strong enough to pump adequate blood and oxygen to support your body, you suffer *heart* failure.

“We know that poorly managed blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels, poorly managed high blood pressure, liver problems from a high alcohol intake, and obesity are the most common factors that increase your risk of developing *heart* failure”.

Dr Gavin Sandercock, a reader in clinical physiology at the University of Essex, said: ” The results of this study are very interesting because they show there is no difference in the effects of drinks which do or do not contain any sugar (sweetened vs artificially sweetened) on the risk of men developing *heart* failure. The authors quite rightly suggest that drinking more sweetened beverages is simply an indicator of a poor diet overall. By setting up the amount of sweetened beverages drunk into quintiles, Cox proportional hazards

ratios were calculated with an without adjusting for age, educational attainment, smoking, alcohol consumption, physical activity, family history of myocardial infarction, history of stroke, angina, hypertension, diabetes, BMI, coffee consumption, fruit intake, vegetable intake, processed meat consumption, fish consumption, and total energy intake.

“So if it’s possible to change your diet to reduce your risk of *heart* failure, this would be a good thing”.

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