

Alcohol Consumption and Breast Cancer Recurrence and Survival Among Women With Early-Stage Breast Cancer: The Life After Cancer Epidemiology Study

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Abstract

PURPOSE To examine the association of alcohol consumption after breast cancer diagnosis with recurrence and mortality among early-stage breast cancer survivors. **PATIENTS AND METHODS** Patients included 1,897 LACE study participants diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer between 1997 and 2000 and recruited on average 2 years postdiagnosis, primarily from the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Cancer Registry. Alcohol consumption (ie, wine, beer, and liquor) was assessed at cohort entry using a food frequency questionnaire. Cox proportional hazards models were used to estimate hazard ratios (HR) and 95% CI with adjustment for known prognostic factors. Results Two hundred ninety-three breast cancer recurrences and 273 overall deaths were ascertained after an average follow-up of 7.4 years. Nine hundred fifty-eight women (51%) were considered drinkers (> 0.5 g/d of alcohol), and the majority drank wine (89%). Drinking ≥ 6 g/d of alcohol compared with no drinking was associated with an increased risk of breast cancer recurrence (HR, 1.35; 95% CI, 1.00 to 1.83) and death due to breast cancer (HR, 1.51; 95% CI, 1.00 to 2.29). The increased risk of recurrence appeared to be greater among postmenopausal (HR, 1.51; 95% CI, 1.05 to 2.19) and overweight and obese women (HR, 1.60; 95% CI, 1.08 to 2.38). Alcohol intake was not associated with all-cause death and possibly associated with decreased risk of non-breast cancer death. **CONCLUSION** Consuming three to four alcoholic drinks or more per week after a breast cancer diagnosis may increase risk of breast cancer recurrence, particularly among postmenopausal and overweight/obese women, yet the cardioprotective effects of alcohol on non-breast cancer death were suggested.

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