

Alcohol Consumption, Medical Conditions, and Health Behavior in Older Adults

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Objectives: To examine associations between drinking patterns, medical conditions, and behavioral health risks among older adults. **Methods:** Analyses compared survey participants (health plan members ages 65 to 90, N = 6662) who drank moderately to those who drank over recommended limits or did not drink. **Results:** Overlimit drinking was associated with smoking; not trying to eat low-fat foods (in men),

and lower BMI (in women). Predictors of not drinking during the prior 12 months included ethnicity, lower education, worse self-reported health, diabetes and heart problems. **Conclusions:** Significant relationships exist between health and alcohol consumption patterns, which vary by gender.

Key words: older adults, alcohol, behavioral health risks, obesity, gender, ethnicity

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