

Alcohol is 'responsible for 4% of cancer deaths' but doctors are failing to emphasise the risks, warn experts

- **Study by Department of Medicine at Boston University Medical Centre**
- **Found that reducing alcohol intake reduces the risk of developing cancer**
- **Researchers found that alcohol resulted in around 20,000 U.S. deaths a year**
- **Lead author said link between cancer and alcohol is 'strong' and that the risk has been 'hiding in plain sight'**

By Daily Mail Reporter

Alcohol is responsible for four per cent of all cancer deaths with the significant risk to drinkers 'hiding in plain sight', according to experts.

A study warned that the preventable risk factor is under-emphasised by doctors and therefore poorly understood by the public.

The American researchers found that alcohol resulted in around 20,000 cancer deaths in the US every year - approximately 3.5 per cent of the total.

Link: A study by the Department of Medicine at Boston University Medical Centre found that approximately 20,000 cancer deaths in the US every year - 3.5 per cent - are linked to alcohol

The study found that the form of the disease most commonly linked with alcohol consumption in women is breast cancer.

The Department of Medicine at Boston University Medical Centre said that breast cancer linked to alcohol accounted for approximately 6,000 deaths every year in the US - 15 per cent of all breast cancer deaths.

Cancers of the mouth, throat and esophagus were common causes of death in men who drank alcohol. The study, which will be published in the American Journal of Public Health in April, also found a correlation between reducing the amount of alcohol we drink and lowering the risk of developing cancer.

Lack of attention: The study's authors warned that risks attached to alcohol are under-emphasised by doctors

Previous studies have consistently shown that drinking alcohol is a significant risk factor in developing cancers of the liver, mouth, throat and oesophagus.

More recent research has shown that alcohol also increases the risk of cancers of the colon and rectum. Boston University's Dr Timothy Naimi led the study that examined recent data from the US on alcohol consumption and cancer mortality.

Cancers of the mouth, throat and oesophagus were related to a total of about 6,000 annual deaths. Although higher levels of alcohol consumption caused an increased risk of developing cancer, consuming 1.5 drinks per day or less still accounted for 30 per cent of all alcohol-attributable cancer deaths. Dr Naimi said: 'The relationship between alcohol and cancer is strong, but is not widely appreciated by the public and remains under-emphasised even by physicians.'

'Alcohol is a big preventable cancer risk factor that has been hiding in plain sight.'