

# The Risk of Alcohol in Europe

Bridging the Gap

16-19 June 2004

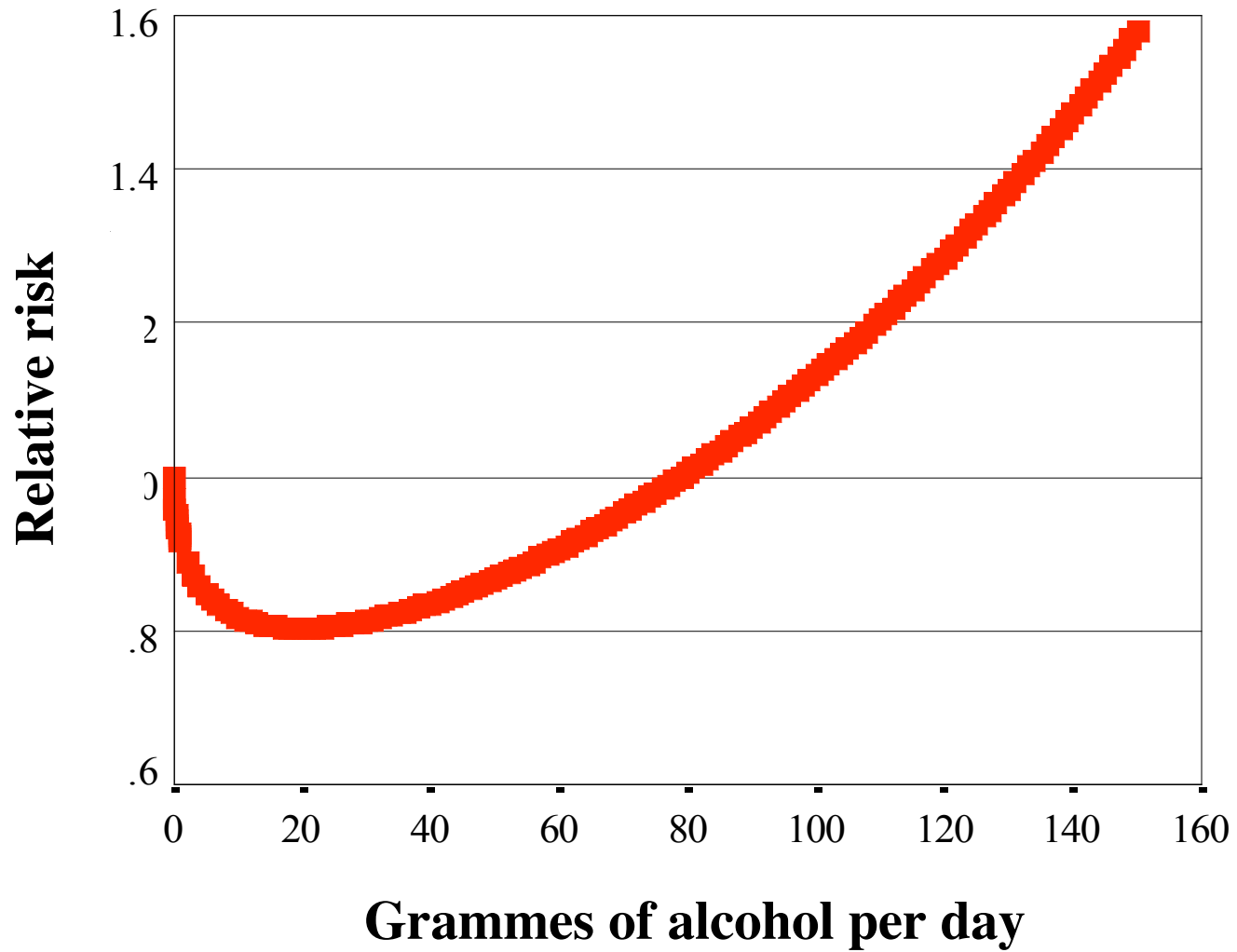
eurocare

ADVOCACY FOR THE PREVENTION OF  
ALCOHOL RELATED HARM IN EUROPE

1. What is the relationship between alcohol and the risk of heart disease?
2. What is the relationship between alcohol and the risk of other diseases?
3. Is moderate drinking risk free?
4. Does per capita alcohol consumption matter?
5. How important is alcohol as a cause of ill-health in Europe?

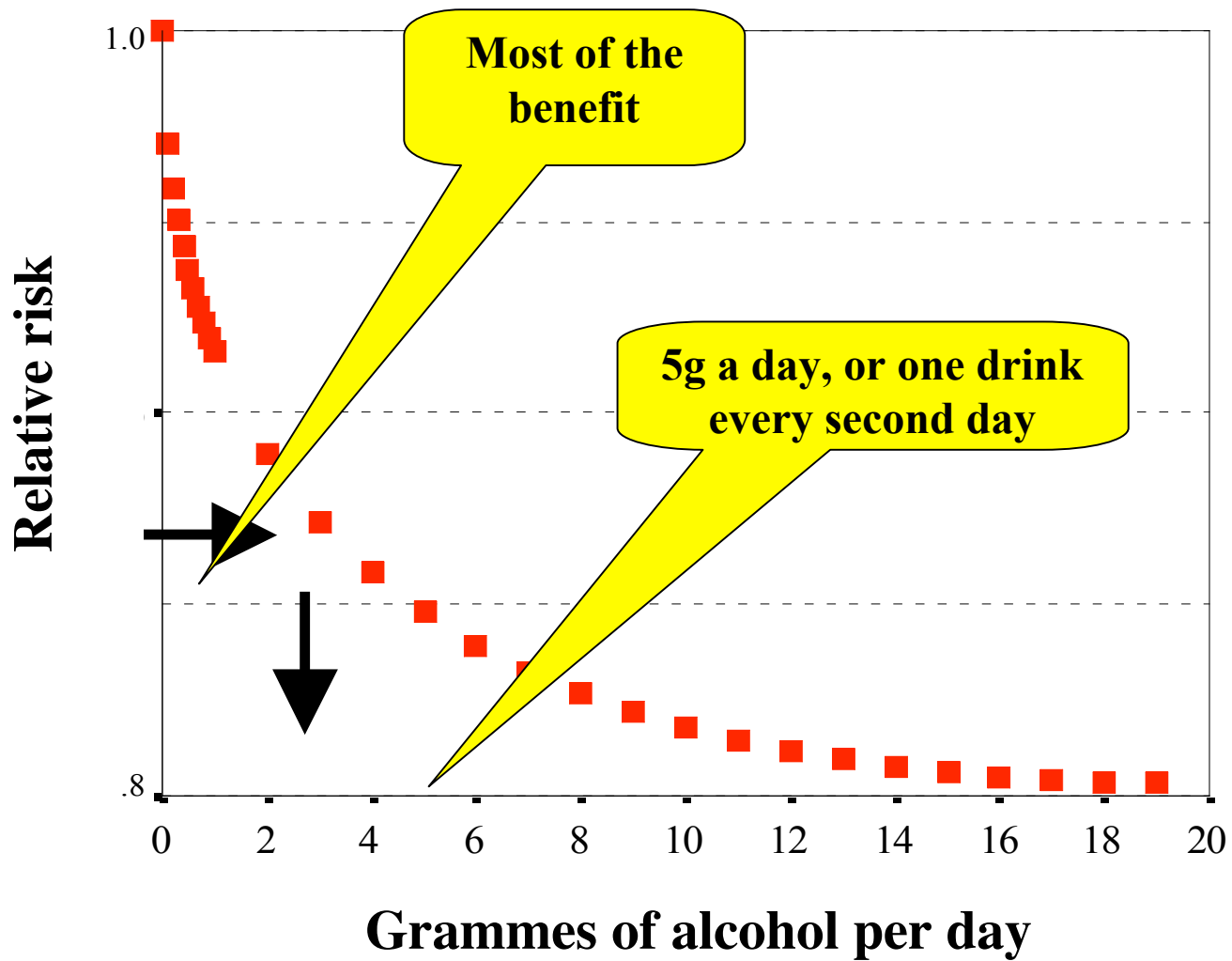
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# The risk of heart disease



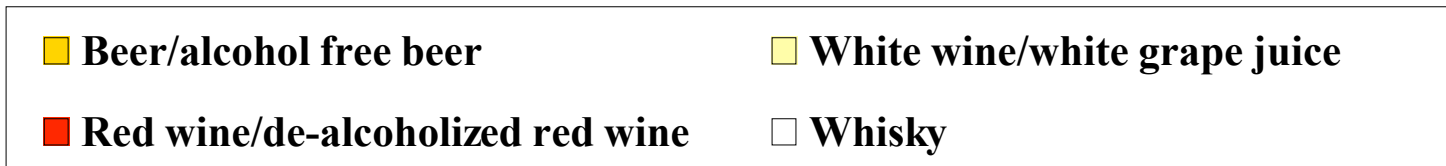
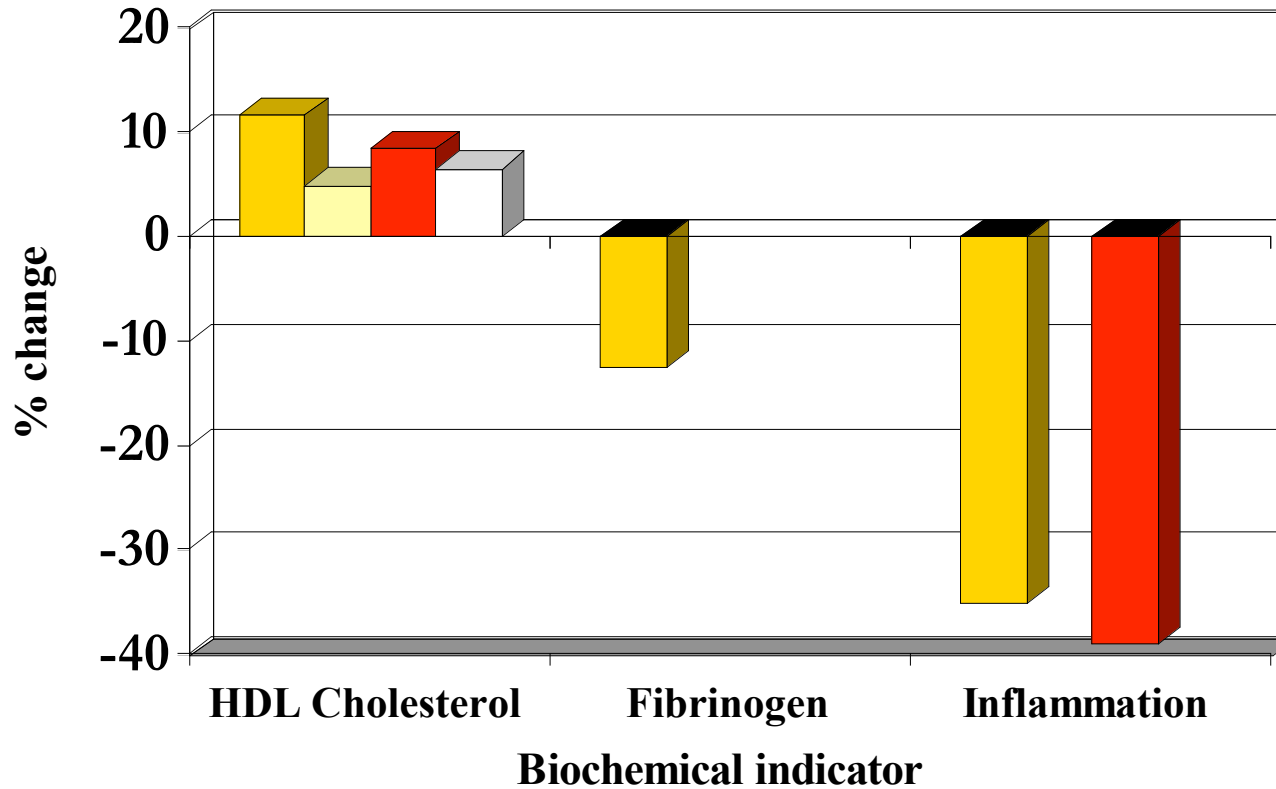
Source: Corrao et al 2000

# The risk of heart disease



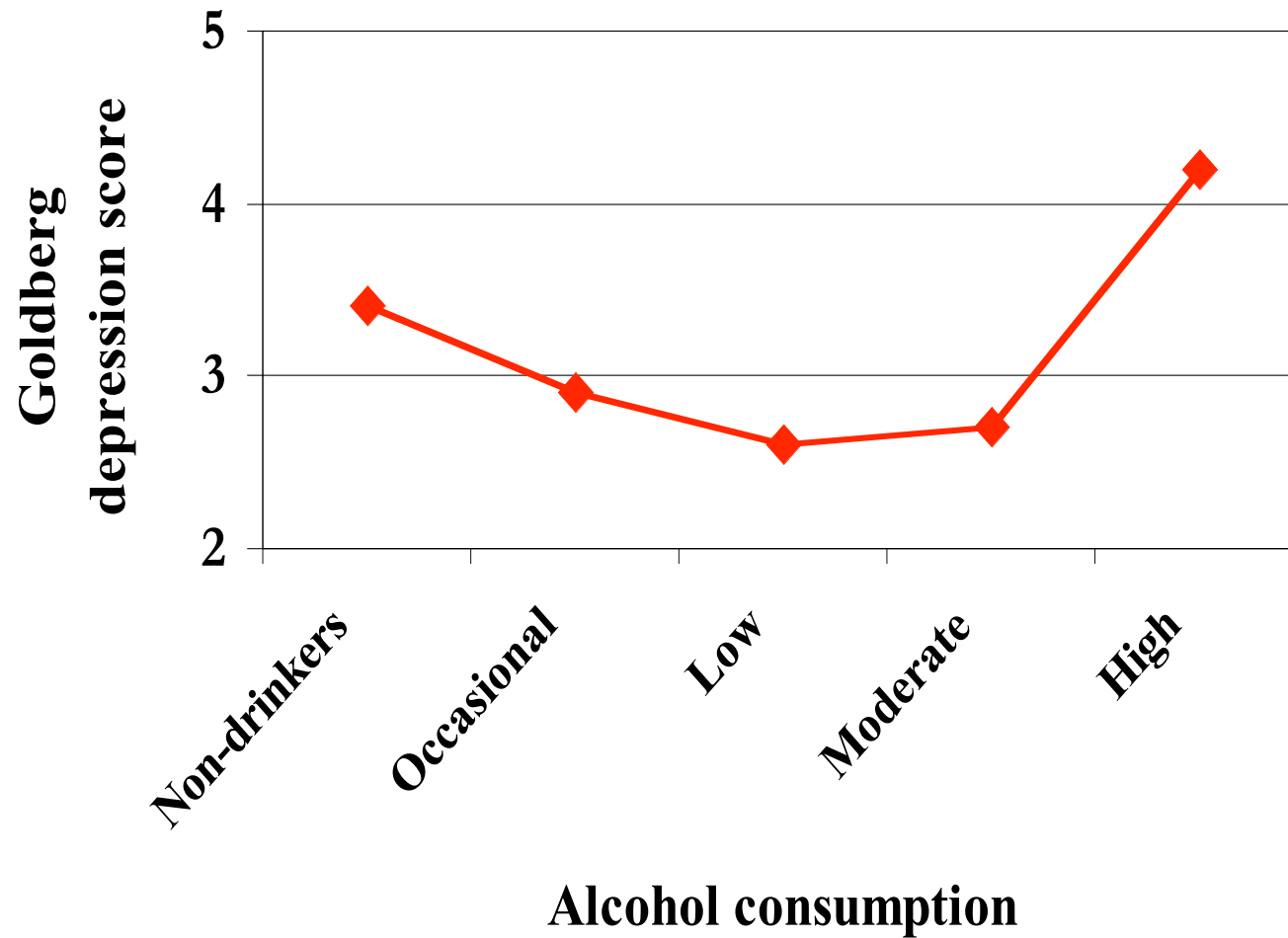
Source: Corrao et al 2000

# Beverage type and heart protective biochemical changes



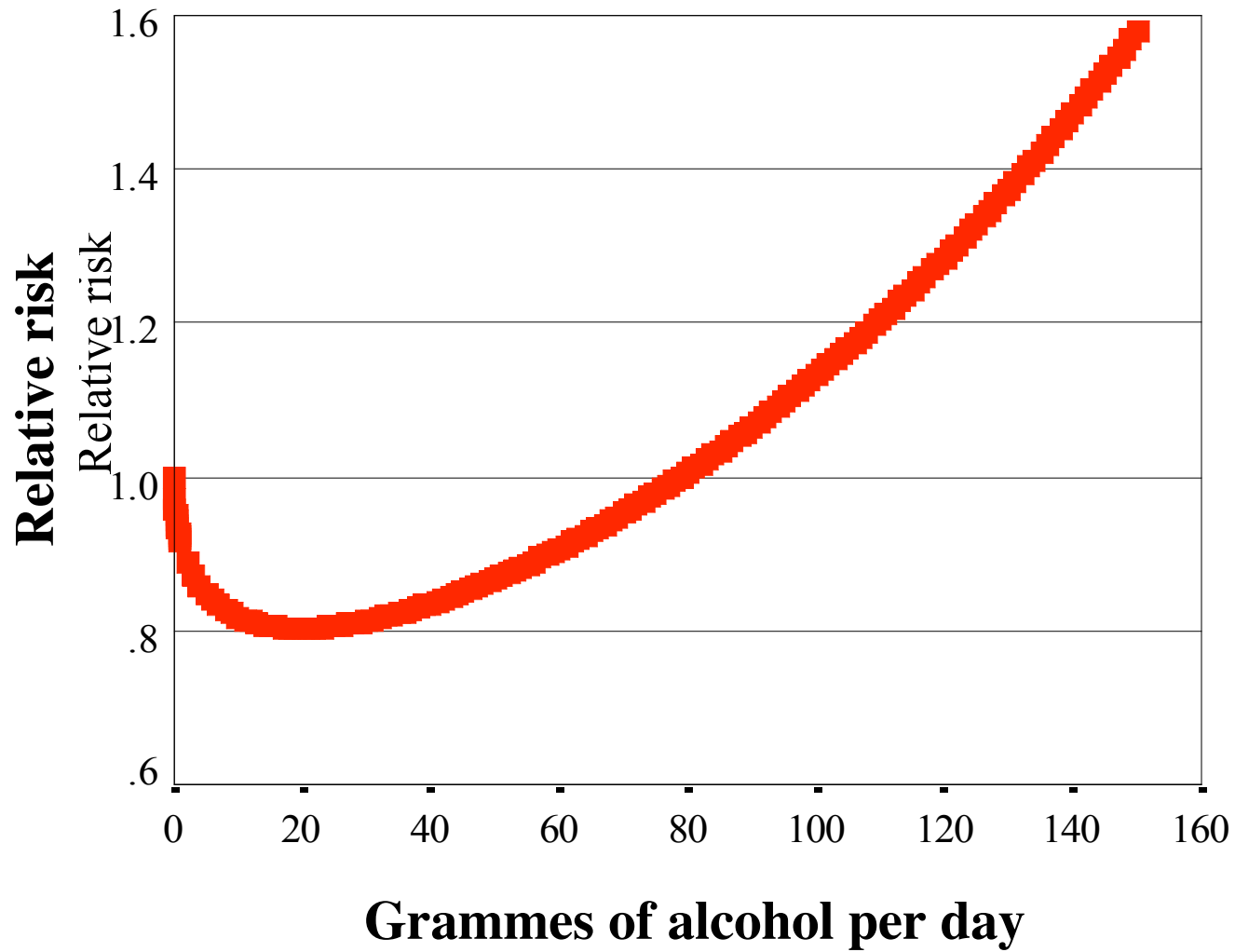
Source: Sierksma 2003

# Male depression and alcohol consumption



Source: Rodgers et al 2000

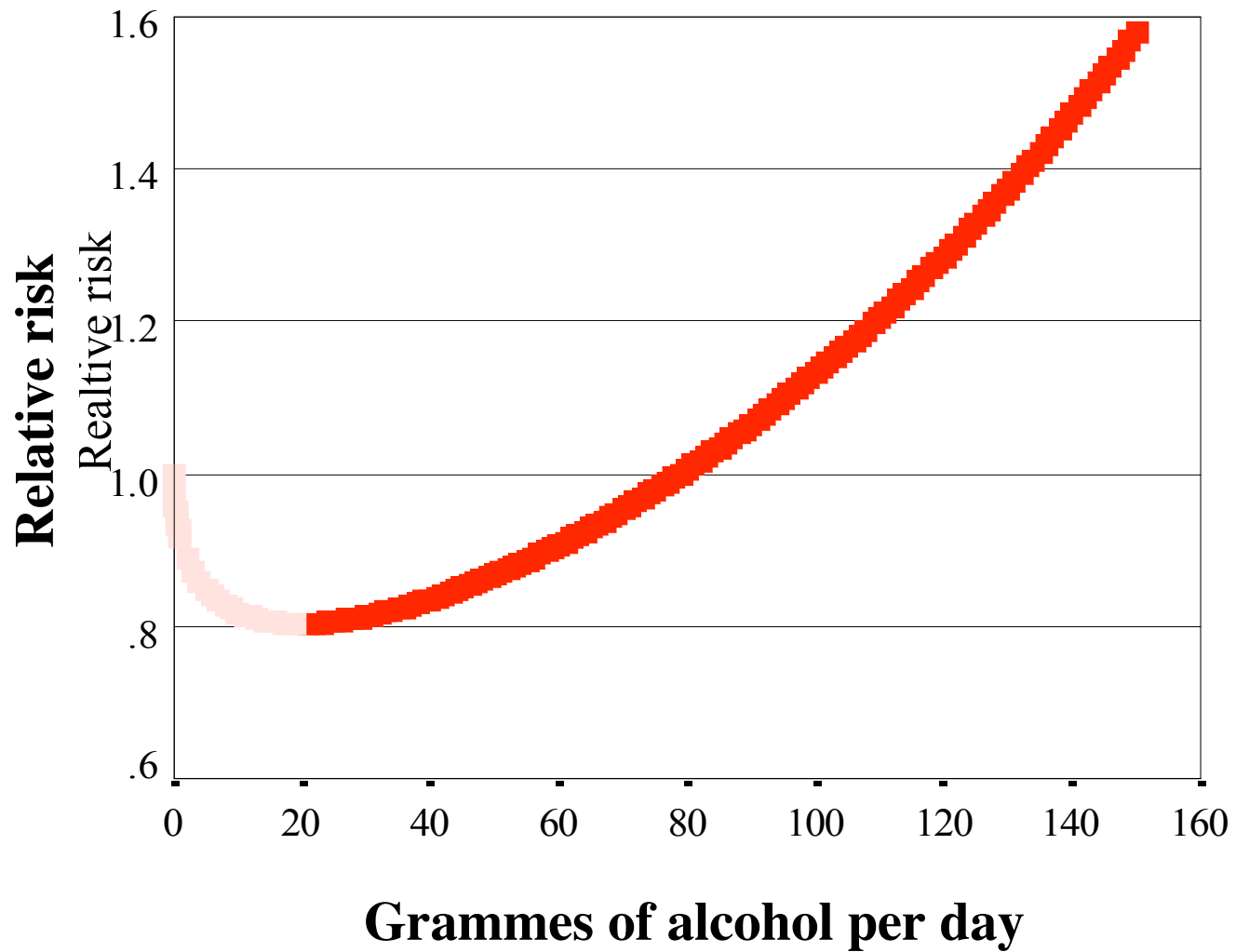
# The risk of heart disease



Source: Corrao et al 2000



# The risk of heart disease

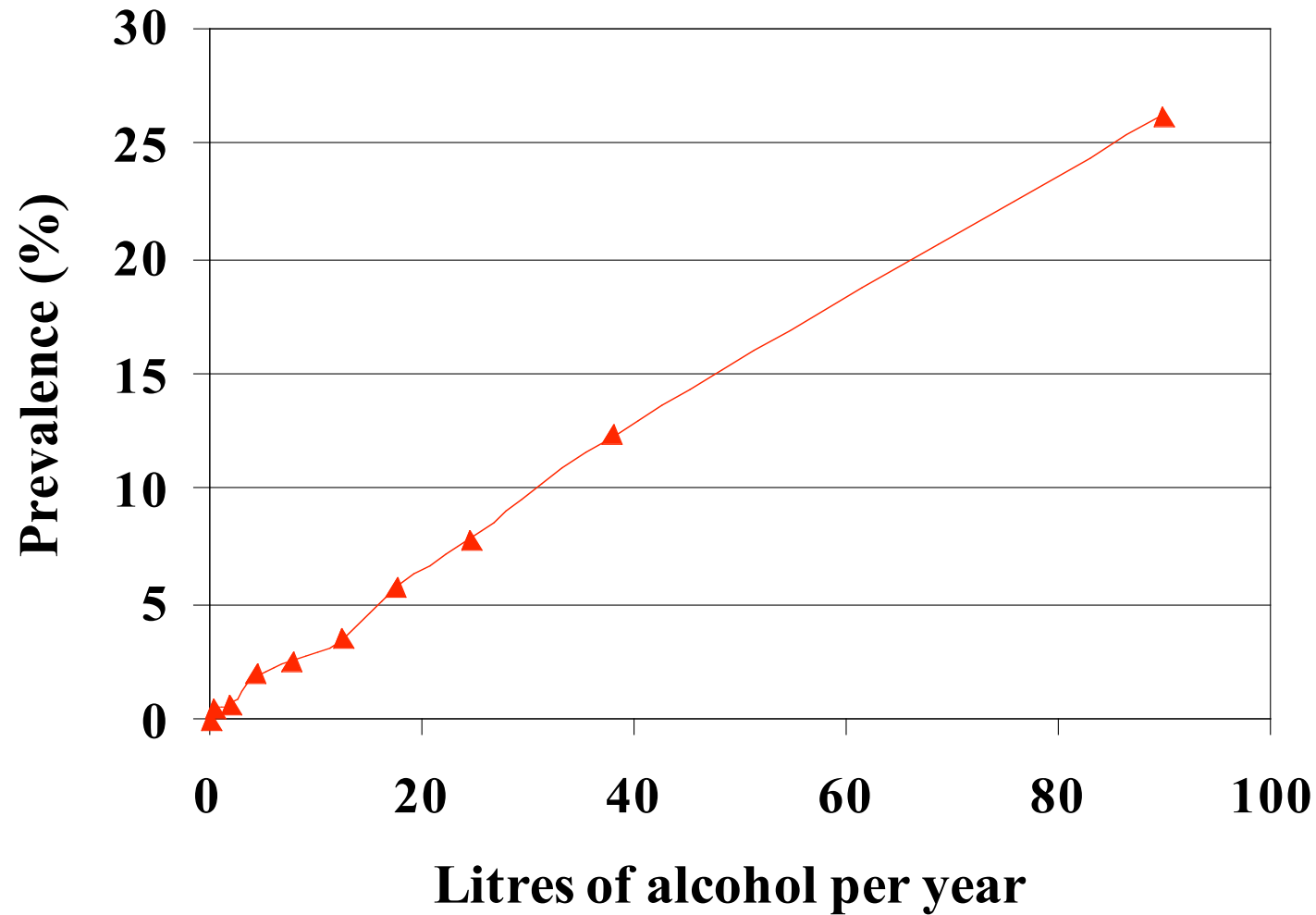


Source: Corrao et al 2000

1. In low doses, alcohol can reduce the risk of heart disease
2. Most of the benefit can be gained at 5g alcohol per day
3. Better studies find a smaller effect
4. Better studies find the benefit at a lower dose
5. Above 20g a day, alcohol increases the risk of heart disease

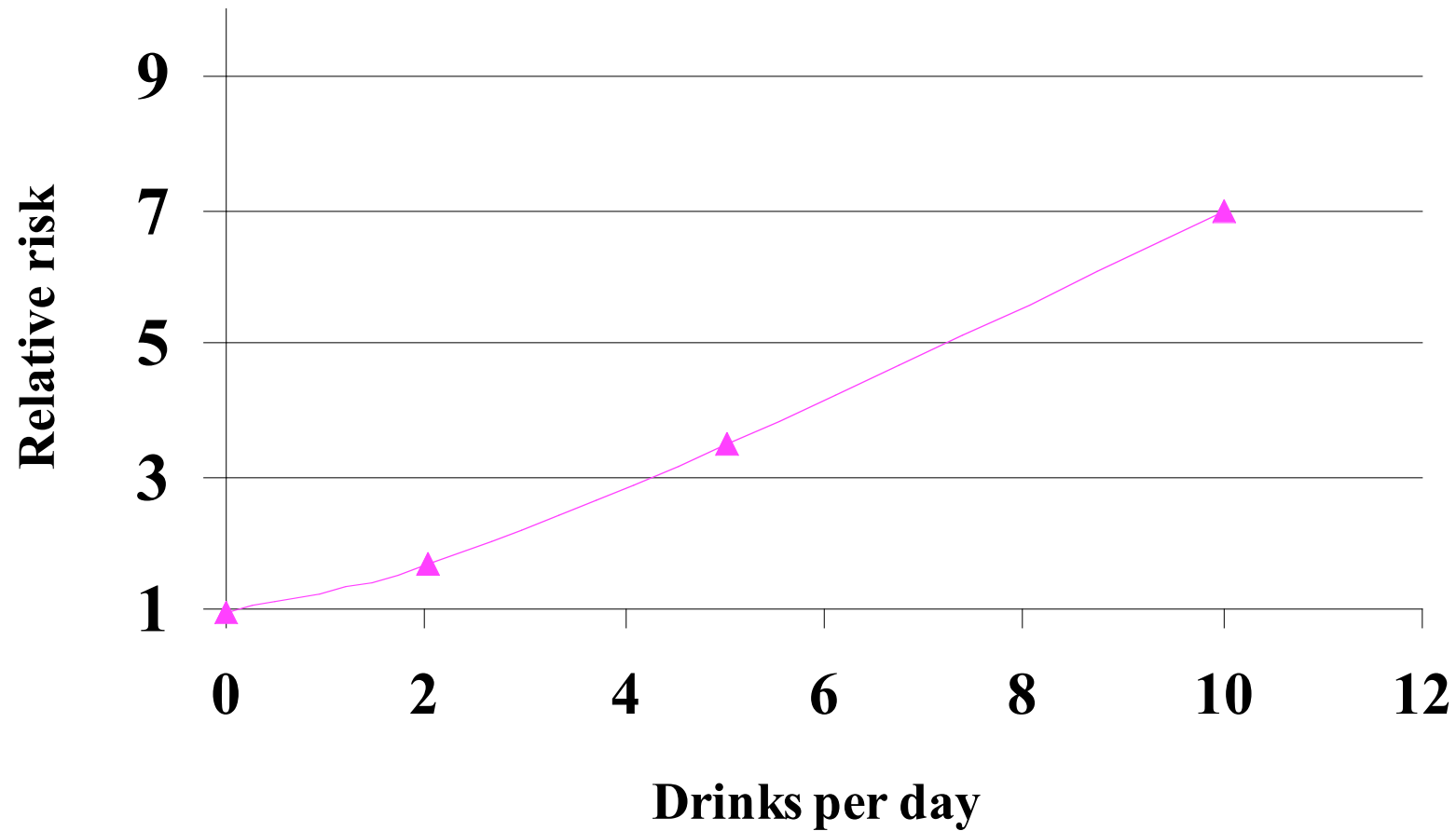
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# The risk of getting into a physical fight



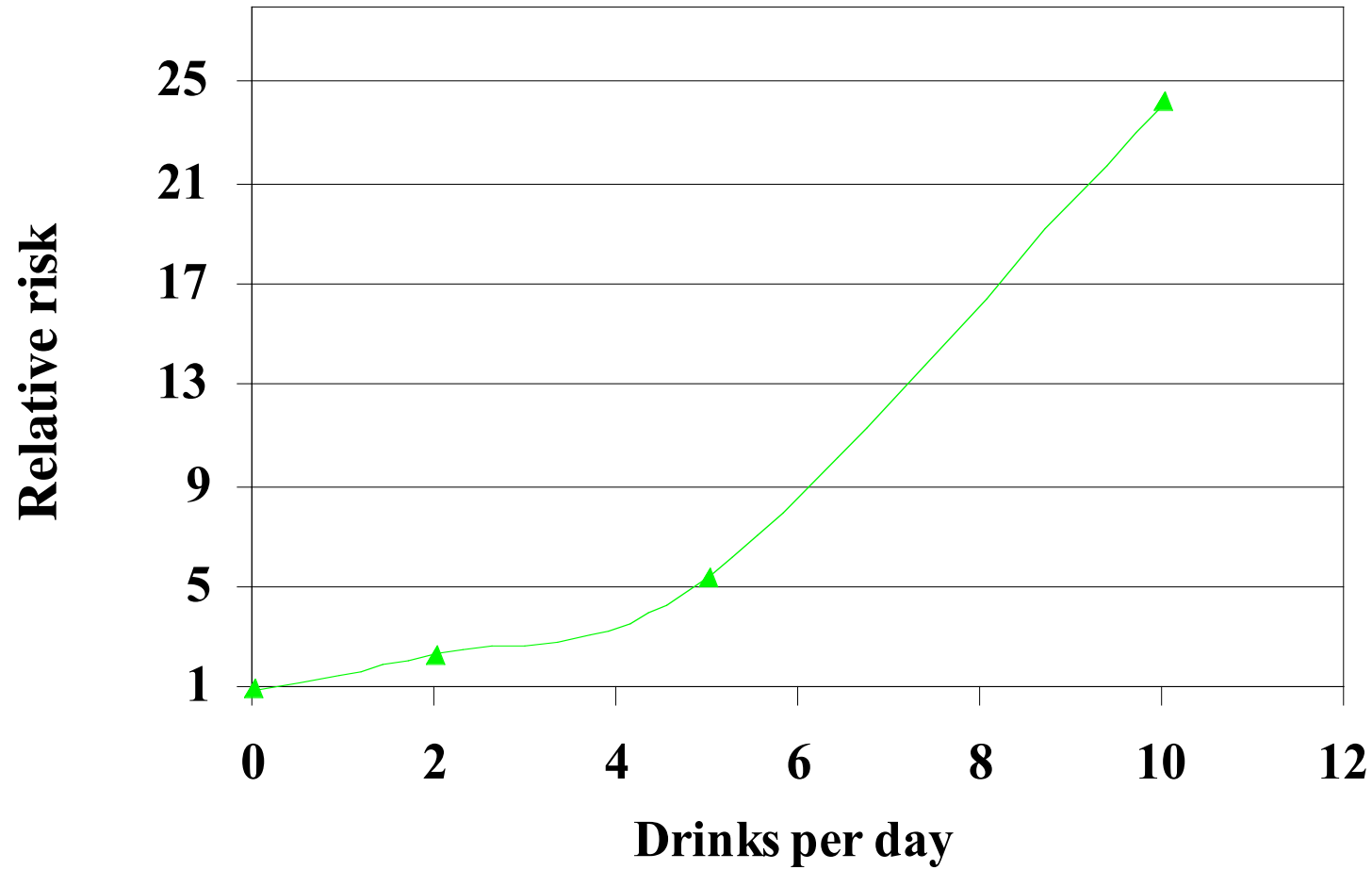
Source: Wyllie et al 2000

# The risk of being dependent on alcohol



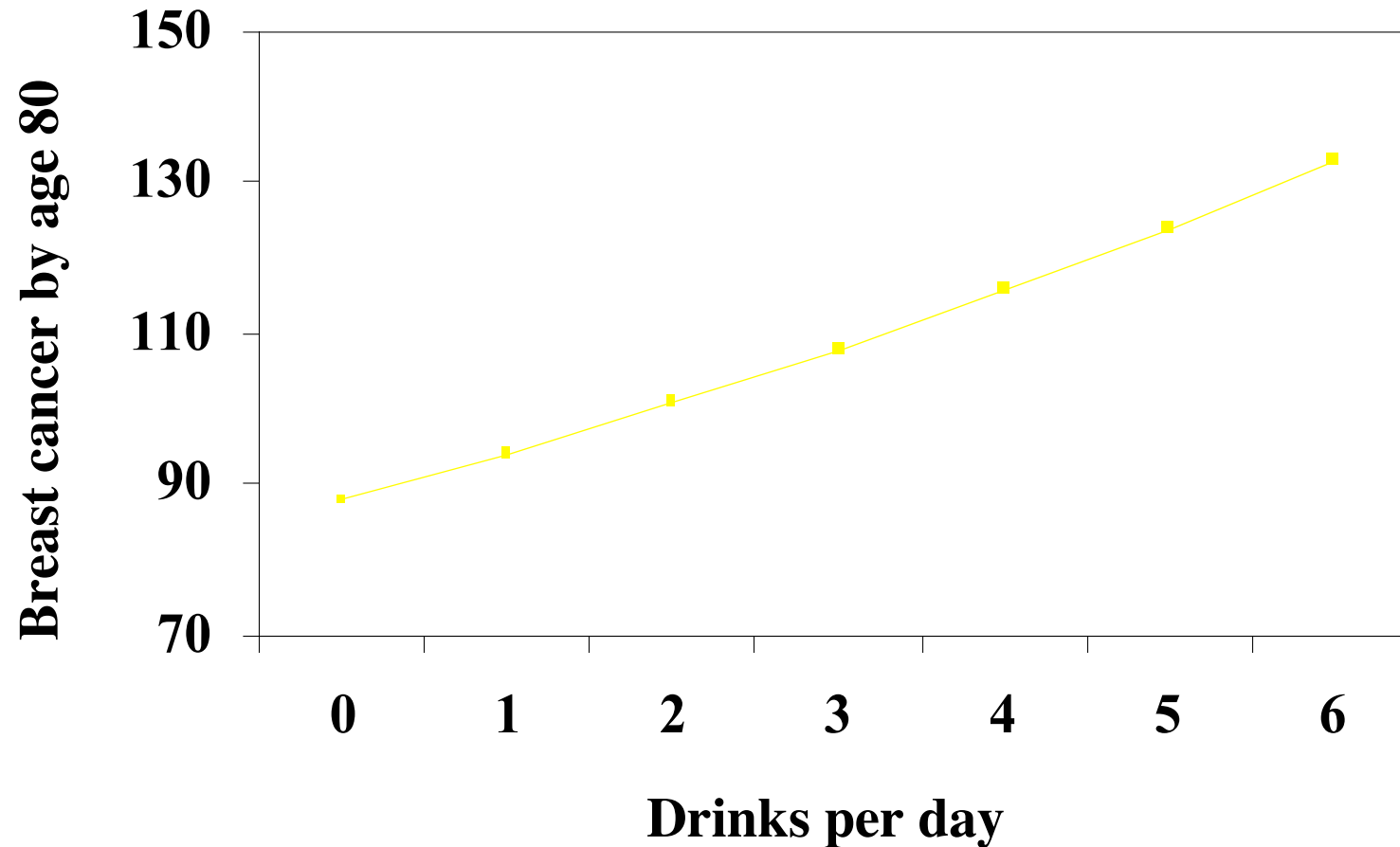
Source: Caetano & Cunradi 2002

# The risk of liver cirrhosis



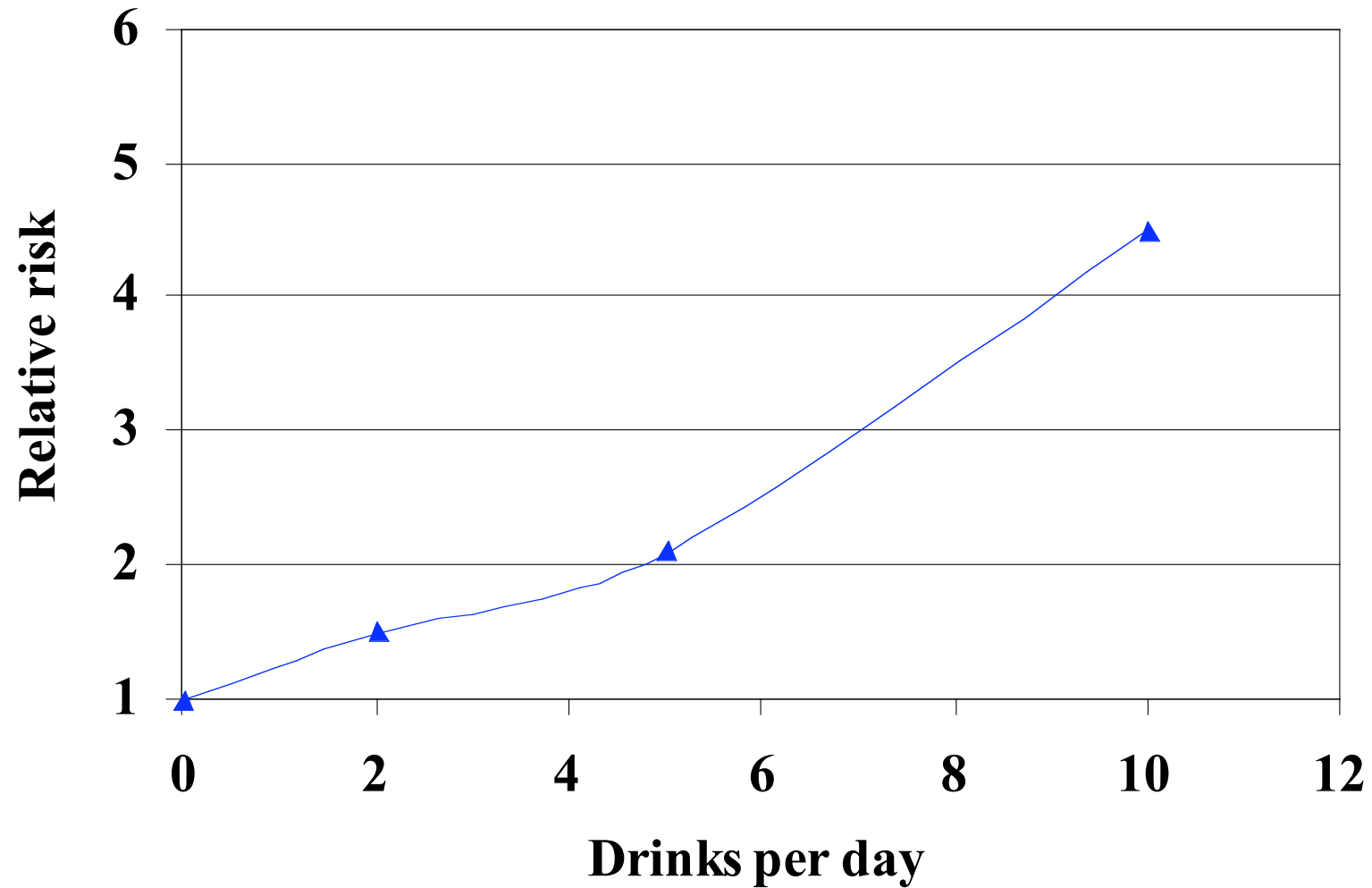
Source: Corrao et al 1999

# Incidence of breast cancer per 1,000 women



Source: Collaborative group on Hormonal factors in Breast Cancer 2002

# The risk of haemorrhagic stroke



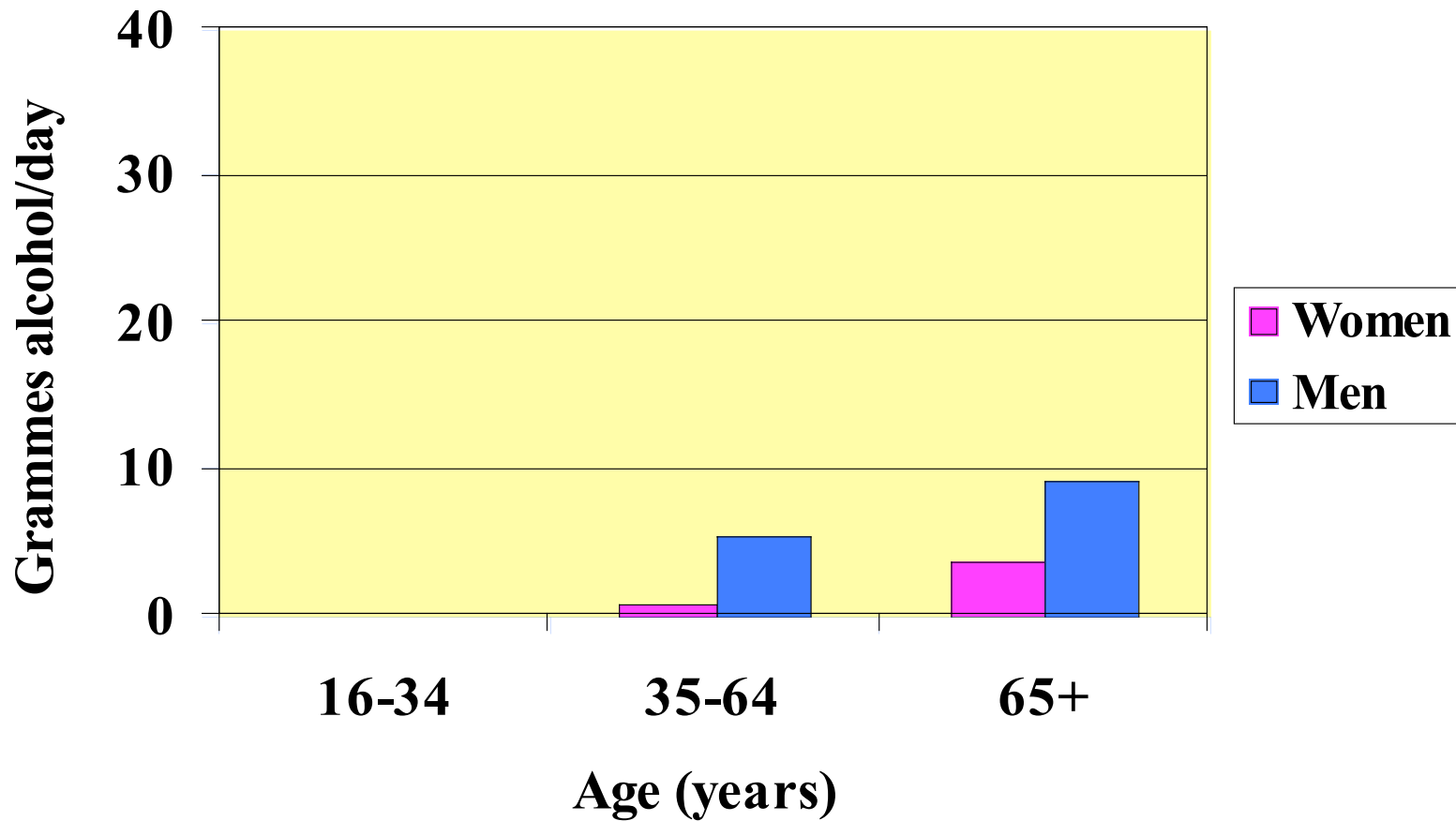
Source: Corrao et al 1999



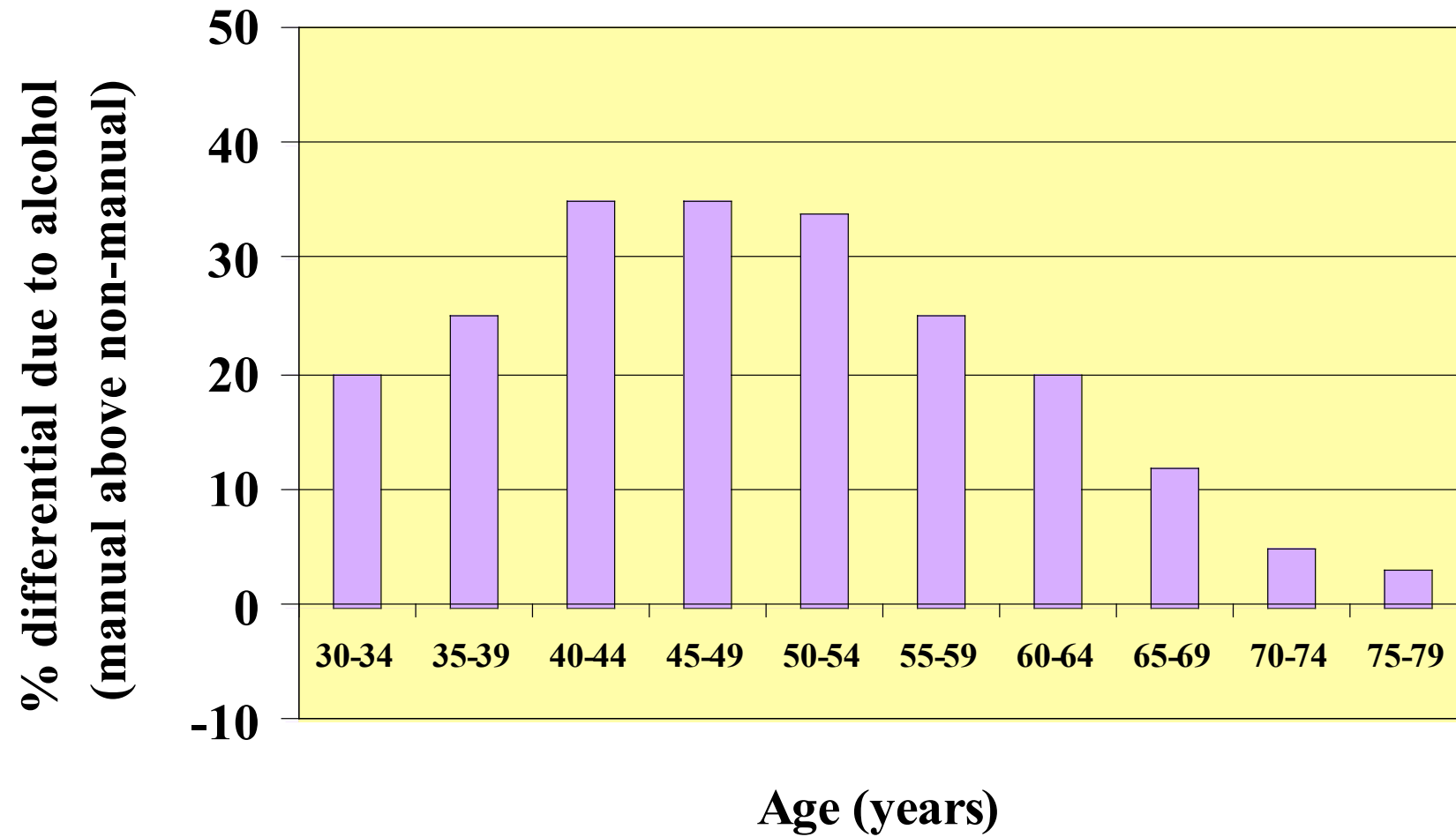
1. Alcohol increases the risk of a wide range of diseases in a dose dependent manner

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# Level of alcohol consumption with lowest risk of death, English men and women



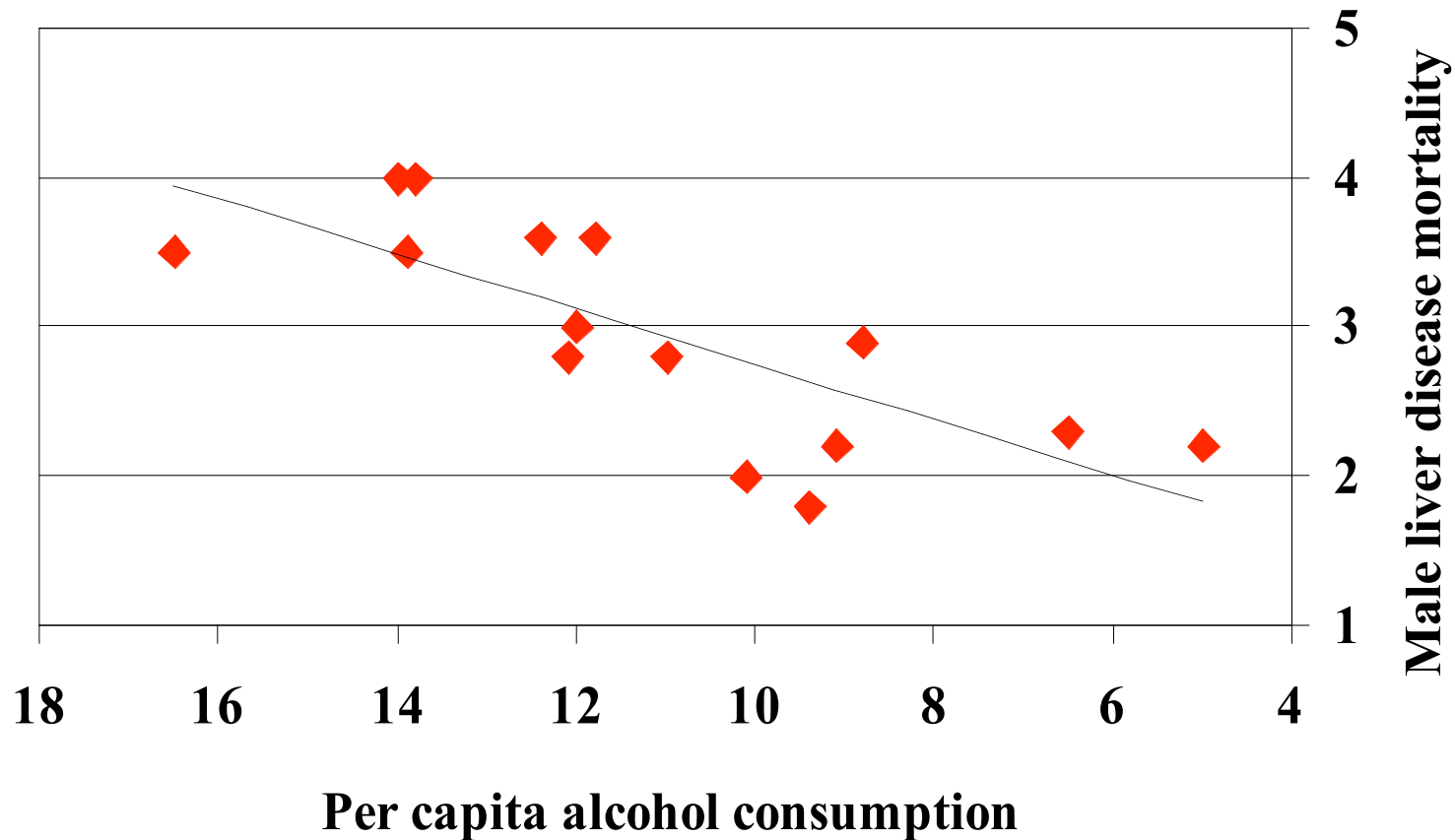
# Alcohol and social class differences in death



1. In younger people, moderate drinking is not risk free
2. In middle aged people, moderate drinking as defined as less than 5g a day might reduce the risk of premature death
3. In older people, moderate drinking as defined as less than 10g a day might be risk free
4. Alcohol can be an important cause of social class differences in death

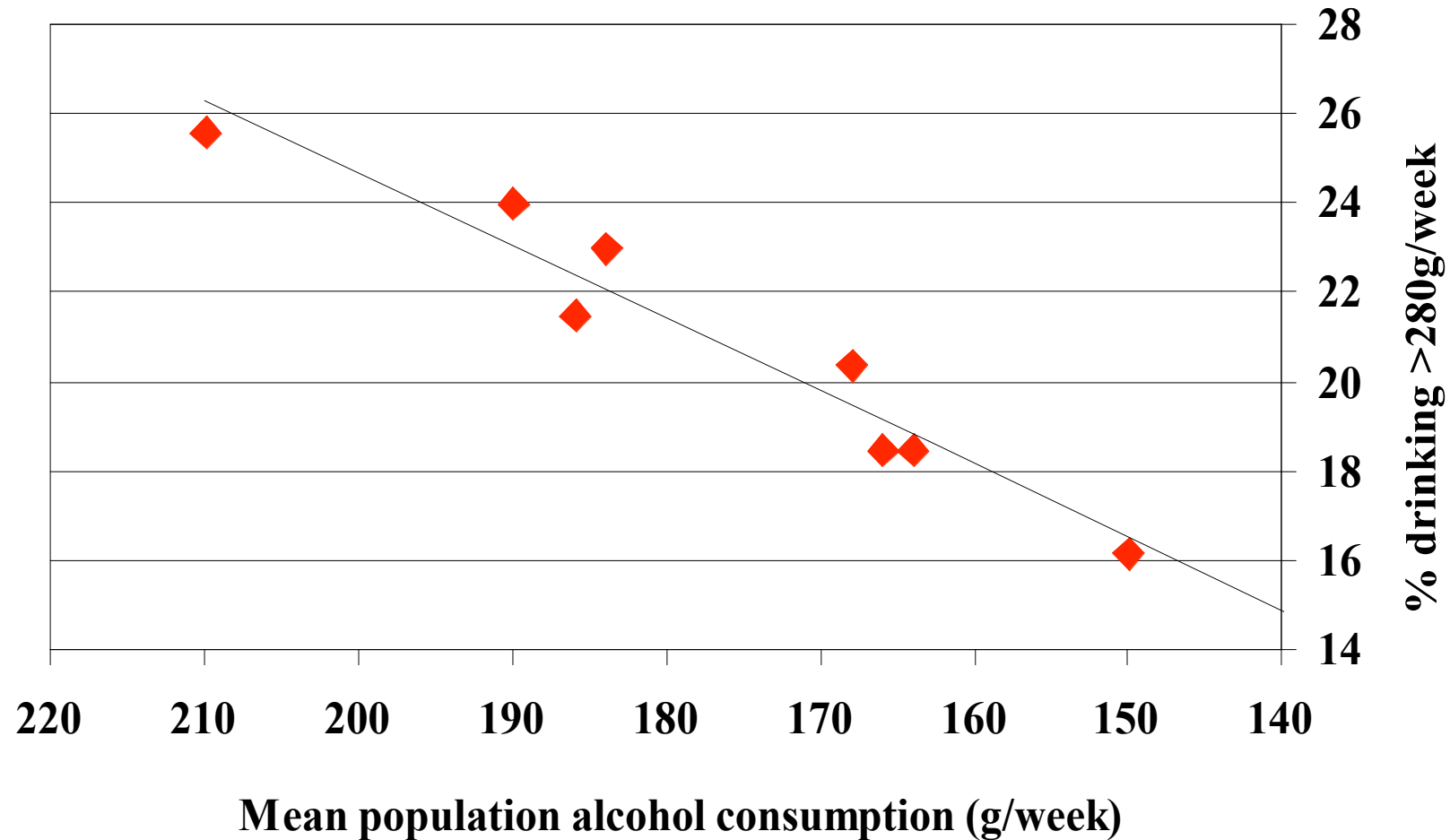
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# Death from liver disease by per capita alcohol consumption; 15 European countries



Source: Ramstedt 2001

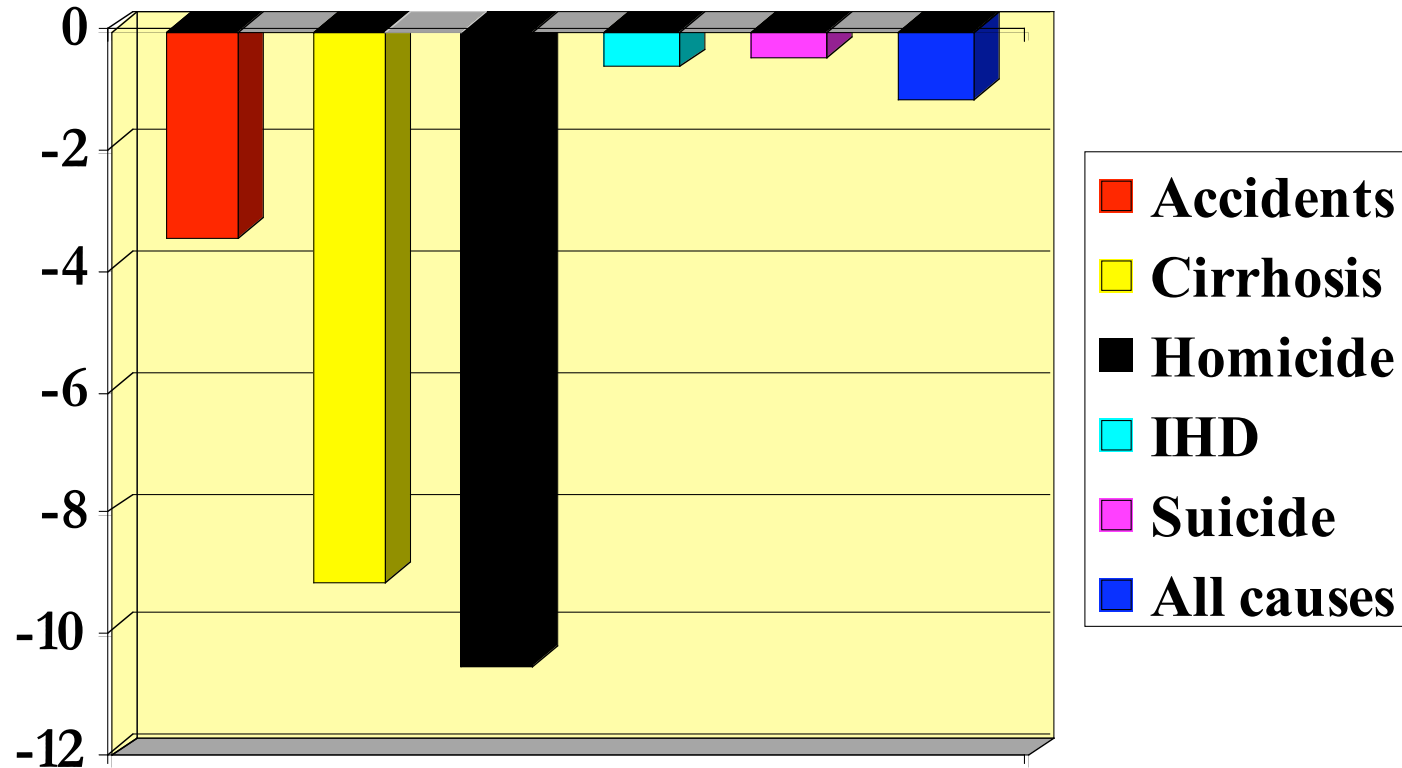
# The proportion of heavy drinkers by alcohol consumption; 8 English regions



Source: Primatesta et al 2002



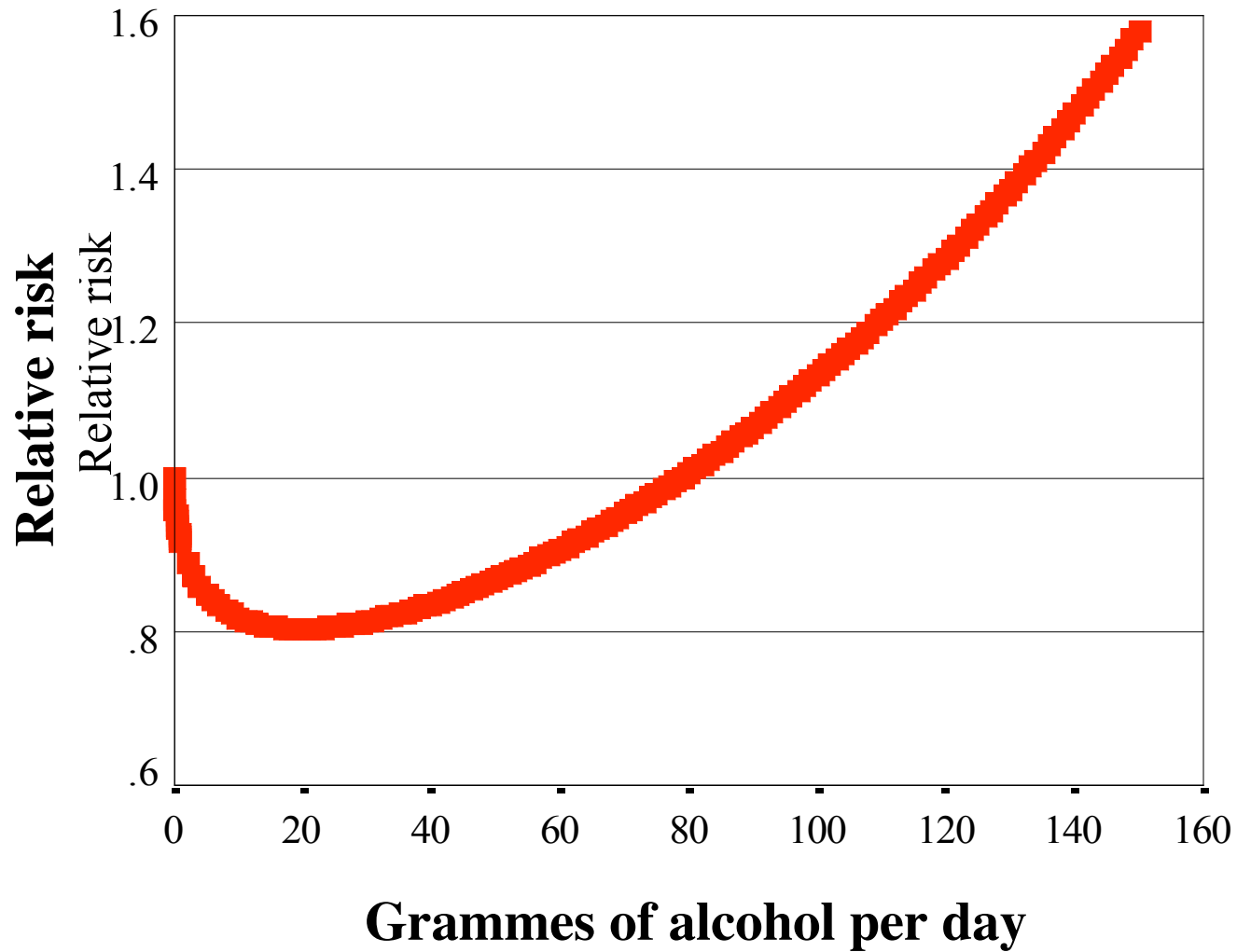
# Reductions in male death rates when alcohol consumption reduced by 1 L



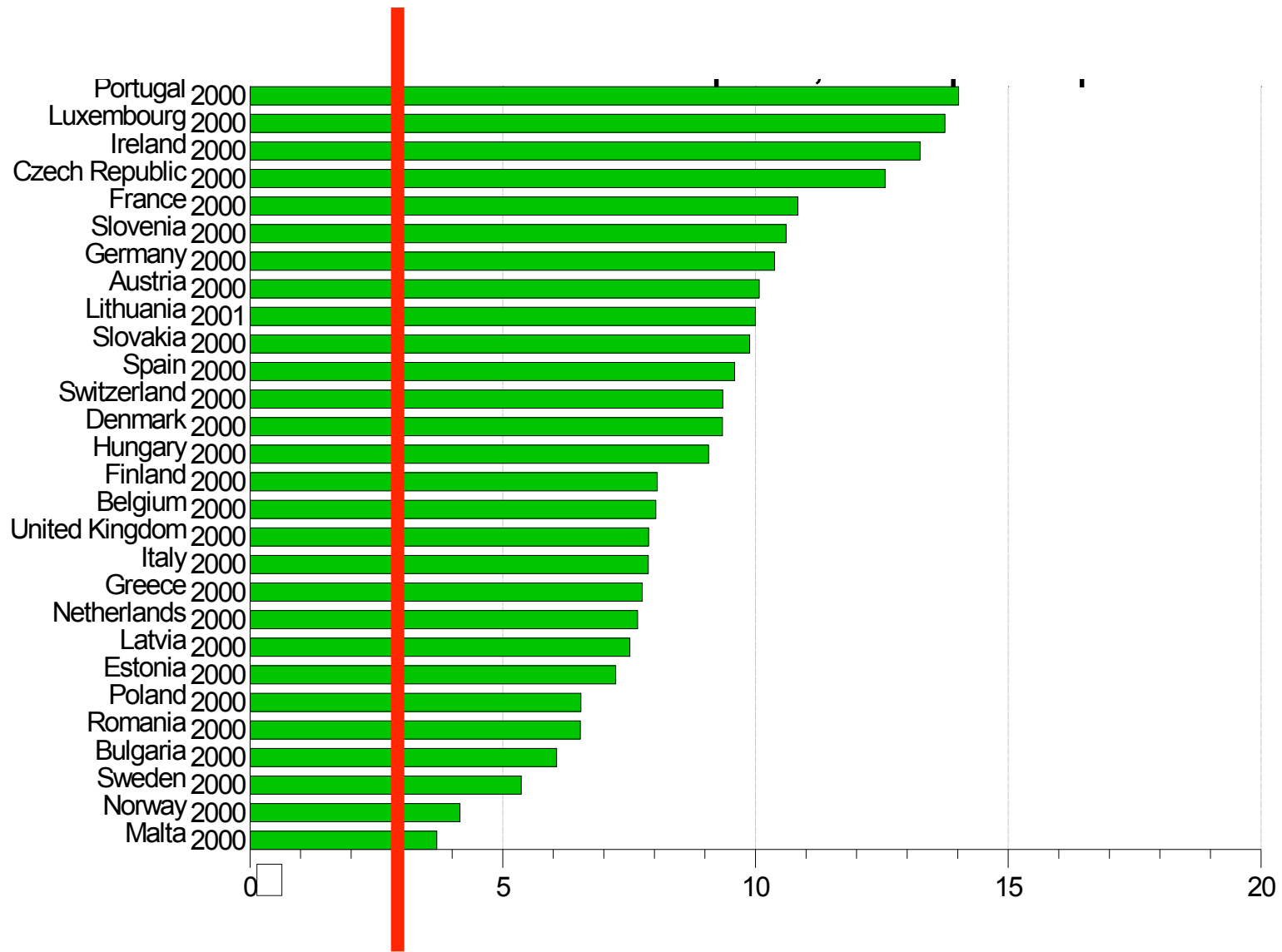
**% reduction in death rate when per capita alcohol consumption of 1L reduced per year**

Source: Norström & Skog 2001

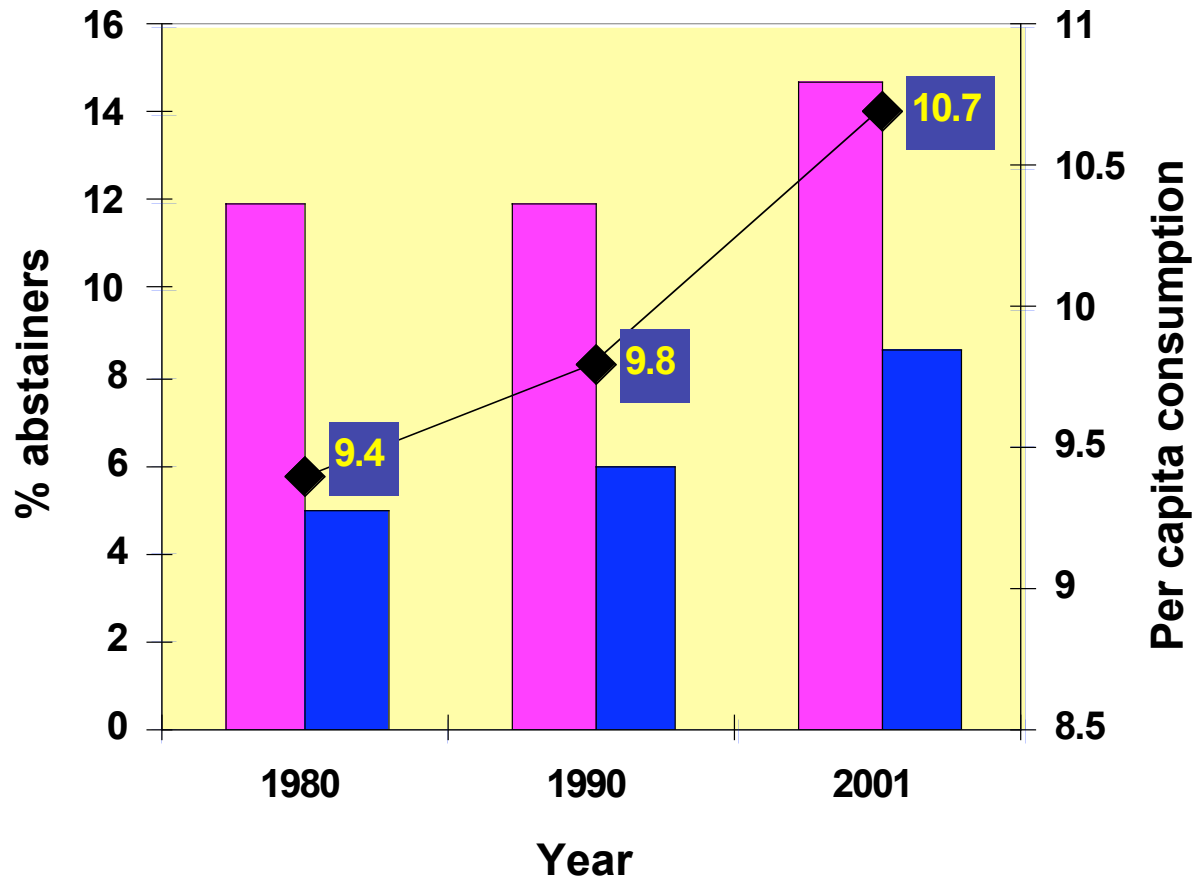
# The risk of heart disease



Source: Corrao et al 2000



# Alcohol consumption and abstainers



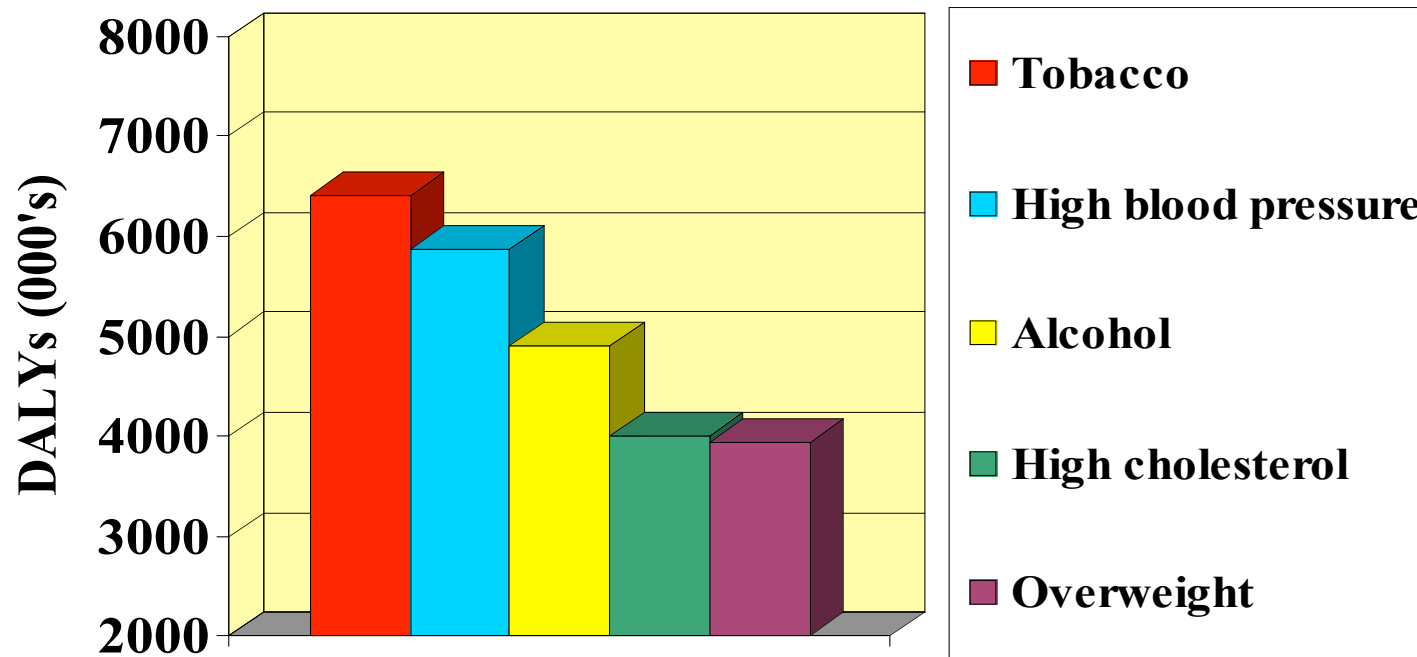
■ % female abstainers   ■ % male abstainers   ◆ Per capita consumption

Source: Academy of Medical Sciences 2004

1. The lower the per capita alcohol consumption, the less the harm
2. The lower the per capita alcohol consumption, the smaller the number of heavier drinkers
3. All European countries are consuming in excess of a level of alcohol consumption that might reduce the risk of mortality from heart disease
4. Reductions in per capita consumption might not increase the numbers of abstainers

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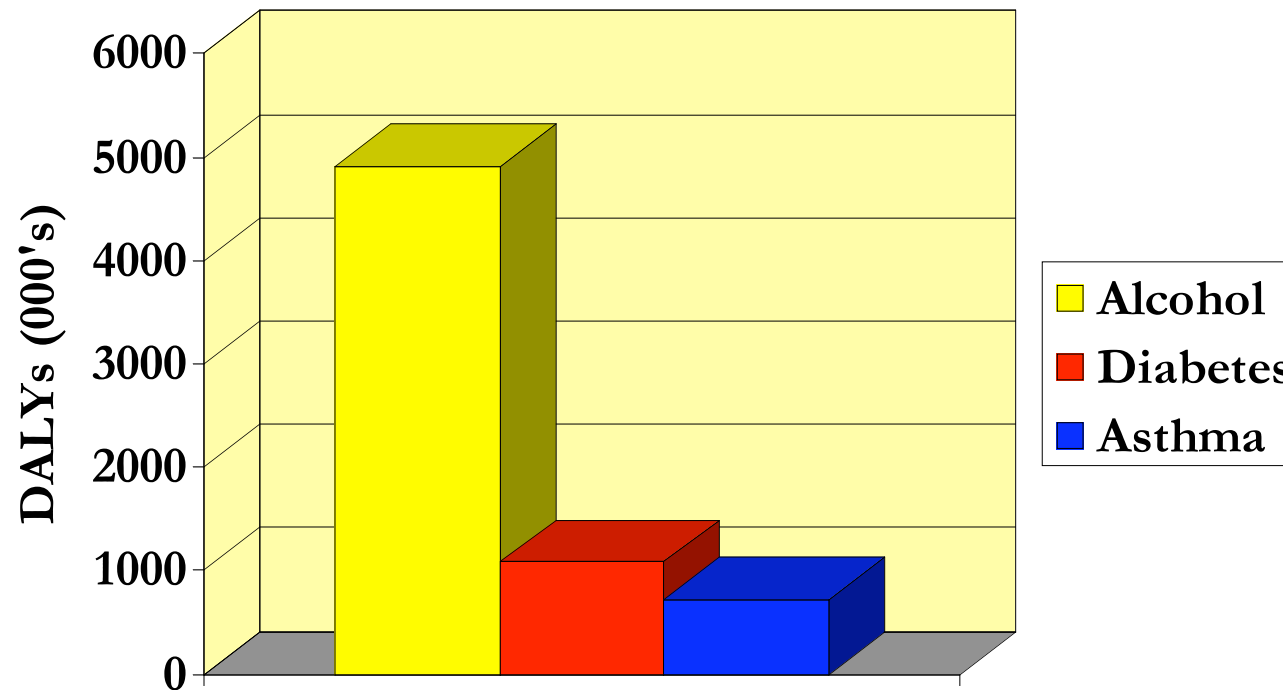
# The top 5 risk factors for ill health and premature death, Europe



Source: World Health Organization 2004

# Alcohol is more important than diabetes or asthma

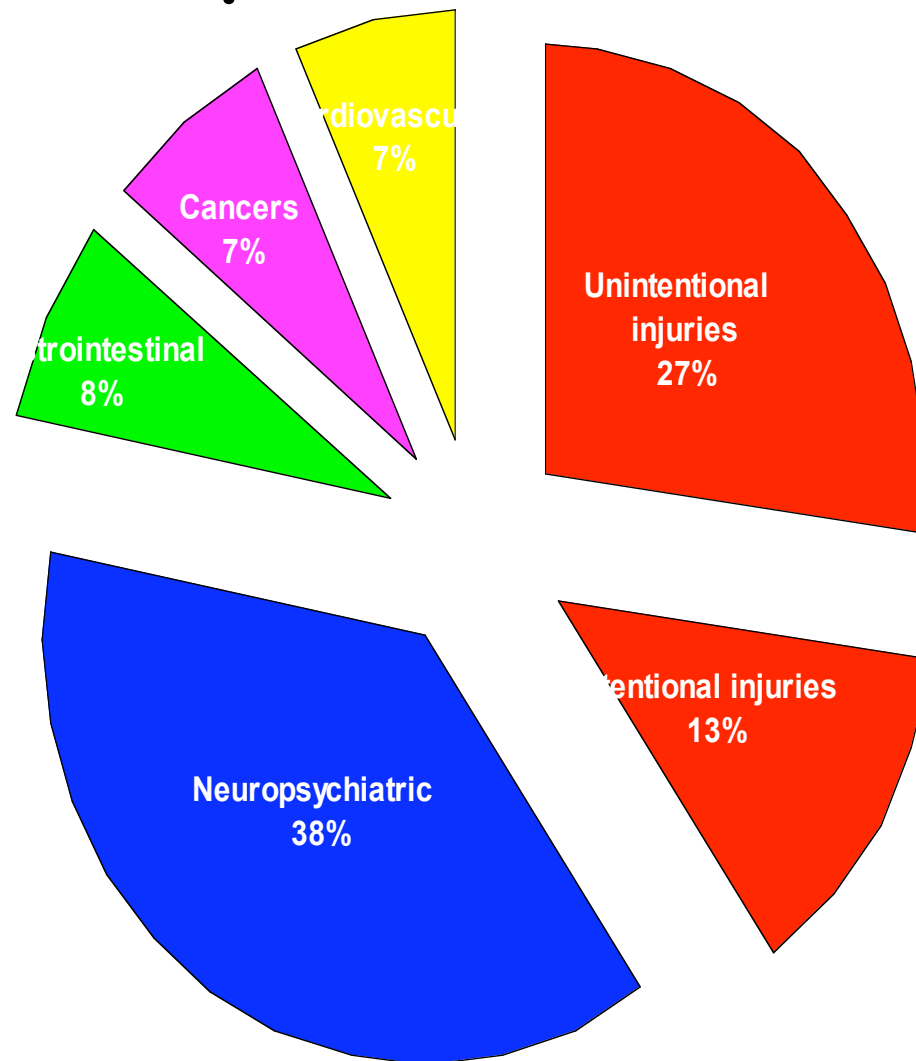
*“Every adult drinker loses 1 week of healthy life each year due to alcohol”*



Source: World Health Organization 2004



# The cause of alcohol-related ill-health and premature death



Source: World Health Organization 2004

- 1. Alcohol is one of the most important risk factors for European ill-health**

1. Although 5g a day reduces the risk of heart disease, more than 20g increases the risk
2. Alcohol increases the risk of many diseases
3. Except, perhaps for older people, moderate drinking is not risk free
4. The lower the alcohol consumption, the less the harm
5. Alcohol is one of the most important causes of ill-health in Europe?

**The basic message is:**

**Less is better**