

Red wine good for nothing, say Indian doctors

Dismissing the widely held theory that red wine is good for health, leading Indian doctors Tuesday said that no one in the world has proved the positive side of either the red wine or any category of alcohol.

Scores of leading doctors assembled in the national capital to participate in a national health summit were unanimous in their view that wine, beer or any other form of alcohol couldn't be promoted as a health enhancer.

'I have gone through nearly 1.6 crores (16 million) articles on health and alcohol but none has proved that alcohol is good for health especially for heart,' said H. K. Chopra, chief cardiologist at Moolchand Medicity here.

'It's simply a perception among people that taking red wine will do wonder for heart. Why don't they take grape juice instead?' Chopra, who is also the chairman of the World Heart Academy, said.

M.C. Mishra head of surgery at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here said: 'People drink alcohol, smoke five packets of cigarettes but never bother to take fruits. In the name of anti-oxidants, these wine companies promote wine and people blindly believe it.'

India needs more of health clubs and wellness centres rather than hospitals, said B.K. Rao chairman of the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

'Most of our people are not health conscious. They take all junk foods, aerated drinks, alcohol and other unnecessary things and complain about the increasing disease burden.

'No one speaks about the benefits of exercise but are loud about wine. It's a worrying trend. We need good food and regular exercise to keep out heart healthy not red wine,' Rao told IANS on the sidelines of the summit.

S. C. Manchanda, a former head of cardiology at AIIMS expressed similar opinion and urged people to drink water instead of wine. 'Drink water, it will keep your body and mind clean.'

Shikha Sharma, a leading nutritionist of the capital also snubbed the idea of alcohol as a health enhancer. 'When people already have so much of burden, they cannot afford more of it with wine or any other form of alcohol. What we need is a balanced diet.'

Chopra also said that the growing nightclubs and pubs are just promoting alcohol among youngsters and it is worsening the situation. 'Sedentary lifestyle coupled with stress and alcohol are making the chronic disease scenario worst in India.'

A recent survey by ASSOCHAM, a leading industry lobby of India, has found that deaths due to chronic diseases like heart attacks and diabetes would register a sharp increase from 3.78 million in 1990 to 7.63 million in 2020.

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