

7. O'Connor KC, McLaughlin KA, De Jager PL, et al. Self-antigen tetramers discriminate between myelin autoantibodies to native or denatured protein. *Nat Med* 2007;13:211–217.

### ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND COGNITIVE DECLINE IN EARLY OLD AGE

**Peter Kabai, Kaposvar, Hungary:** Sabia et al.<sup>1</sup> correctly stated that “some participants may have underestimated their consumption.” In 1999, total alcohol consumption for the United Kingdom per capita for those aged 15 years and older was estimated at 10.3 L reported plus about 1.7 L unreported absolute alcohol.<sup>2</sup> Drinking 12 L a year equals about 26 g of alcohol per day per person. Using data in table 1,<sup>1</sup> the median self-reported consumption is 10.6 g per day per person, which is less than half of the estimated consumption for the United Kingdom in 1999. However, the true average consumption of the study population may be different when taking the maximal consumed value for each category, as the calculated maximal consumption is still lower (22.5 g/day/person) than the average consumption in the United Kingdom. It is likely that the data are biased because heavy drinking was substantially underestimated.<sup>3</sup> The association between drinking habits and cognitive abilities at older age is a novel study and it is important to rigorously estimate the possible bias of the data.

**Author Response: Severine Sabia, London; Archana Singh-Manoux, Paris:** The authors thank Dr. Kabai for his comments on our article.<sup>1</sup> The Whitehall II study is not representative of the general

population. Dr. Kabai estimated alcohol consumption in the United Kingdom at “26 g of alcohol/day per person”; in our study it was 16 g/day in men and 7 g/day in women. The difference is that our study comprised older adults with stable civil service jobs who were healthier than the general population.<sup>4</sup> We made no claims about calculating mean average consumption in the UK population. In addition, the lower prevalence of heavy drinkers in our study is unlikely to have biased associations with cognitive decline. To assess these associations, we modeled the continuum of alcohol consumption using refined categories in the supplementary analyses to show harm to cognitive health in those who drank 36 grams or more of alcohol every day. We could not examine the effects on cognitive decline among those drinking even higher quantities as few participants in our cohort drank more. However, this does not imply that the results for participants in the 36 g/day category are biased.

© 2014 American Academy of Neurology

1. Sabia S, Elbaz A, Britton A, et al. Alcohol consumption and cognitive decline in early old age. *Neurology* 2014;82:1–8.
2. The Institute of Alcohol Studies (2013) alcohol consumption factsheet. Available at: <http://www.ias.org.uk/Alcohol-knowledge-centre/Consumption.aspx>. Accessed January 18, 2014.
3. Northcote J, Livingston M. Accuracy of self-reported drinking: observational verification of “last occasion” drink estimates of young adults. *Alcohol Alcohol* 2011;46:709–713.
4. Wills AK, Lawlor DA, Matthews FE, et al. Lifecourse trajectories of systolic blood pressure using longitudinal data from eight UK cohorts. *PLOS Med* 2011;8:e1000440.

## WriteClick: Rapid Online Correspondence

Have a comment on a recent *Neurology*<sup>®</sup> article you would like to share? Now it is easier and more convenient. *Neurology.org* has launched WriteClick on the home page and sidebars of each article to encourage remarks and debate among users.

WriteClick is restricted to comments about studies published in *Neurology* within the last eight weeks.

Learn more at <http://www.neurology.org/letters>

Author disclosures are available upon request ([journal@neurology.org](mailto:journal@neurology.org)).

# Neurology<sup>®</sup>

## **Alcohol consumption and cognitive decline in early old age**

Peter Kabai, Severine Sabia and Archana Singh-Manoux

*Neurology* 2014;83;476

DOI 10.1212/01.wnl.0000453101.10188.87

**This information is current as of July 28, 2014**

<b>Updated Information &amp; Services</b>	including high resolution figures, can be found at: <a href="http://n.neurology.org/content/83/5/476.full">http://n.neurology.org/content/83/5/476.full</a>
<b>References</b>	This article cites 3 articles, 1 of which you can access for free at: <a href="http://n.neurology.org/content/83/5/476.full#ref-list-1">http://n.neurology.org/content/83/5/476.full#ref-list-1</a>
<b>Permissions &amp; Licensing</b>	Information about reproducing this article in parts (figures, tables) or in its entirety can be found online at: <a href="http://www.neurology.org/about/about_the_journal#permissions">http://www.neurology.org/about/about_the_journal#permissions</a>
<b>Reprints</b>	Information about ordering reprints can be found online: <a href="http://n.neurology.org/subscribers/advertise">http://n.neurology.org/subscribers/advertise</a>

*Neurology*® is the official journal of the American Academy of Neurology. Published continuously since 1951, it is now a weekly with 48 issues per year. Copyright © 2014 American Academy of Neurology. All rights reserved. Print ISSN: 0028-3878. Online ISSN: 1526-632X.

