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Alcohol intake over the life course and mammographic density.

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Alcohol intake is one of the few modifiable risk factors for breast cancer. Current alcohol intake has been associated with mammographic density, a strong intermediate marker of breast cancer risk, though few studies have examined the effect of both current and average lifetime alcohol intake. We interviewed 262 participants from a New York birth cohort (born 1959-1963) and obtained mammograms from 163 (71.5% of participants with a mammogram). We collected information on alcohol intake by beverage type separately for each decade of life. We used multivariable linear models to assess the associations between current and average lifetime alcohol intake and mammographic density using a quantitative measure of density from digitized images. Overall, current alcohol intake was more strongly associated with mammographic density than average lifetime alcohol intake; compared with nondrinkers, those with current intake of seven or more servings per week had on average 12.3% (95% CI: 4.3, 20.4) higher density, adjusted for average lifetime alcohol intake, age, and body mass index. We observed a consistent inverse association for red wine intake and mammographic density, suggesting that the positive association between mammographic density and overall alcohol intake was driven by other types of alcoholic beverages. Our findings support an association between current alcohol intake and increased mammographic density independent of the effect of average lifetime alcohol intake. If replicated, our study suggests that reducing current alcohol consumption, particularly beer and white wine intake, may be a means of reducing mammographic density regardless of intake earlier in life.

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