Not safe to have even occasional tipple: Study

Any benefits are offset by the risks, which rise steeply with the amount consumed each day.

A glass of wine or shot of spirits – per "standard drink" – 10g of pure alcohol – increases the risk of serious health problems by about 0.5 per cent, the researchers reported.

The "less is better, none is best" curve, the study found, averaged at about 0.33 per cent for every additional drink per day, for example, for every five "units" of alcohol per day, the likelihood of serious consequences jumps by 37 per cent.

"The protective effect of alcohol on its own is minimal," Dr Wai said in summarising the results, published in medical journal The Lancet yesterday.

"Overall, the health risks associated with alcohol are in line with the amounts consumed each day, showing that one "standard drink" – 10g of alcohol, equivalent to a small beer, glass of wine or shot of spirits – per day, for example, may be the sides of developing at least one of two dozen health problems by about 0.33 per cent the researchers reported.

"Lookalike science, in short, is not safe to have even occasional tipple," Dr Wai, who regularly sees patients with alcohol-related problems, said in summarising the results, published in medical journal The Lancet yesterday.

"Overall, drinking was the seventh leading risk factor for premature death and disease in 2016, accounting for just over 2 per cent of deaths and disease and injury compared with those of outdoor air pollution. With five "units" of alcohol per day, the likelihood of serious consequences jumps by 37 per cent.

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