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Self-evaluation of Health and Alcohol Consumption

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The reasons that drive individuals to consume or not alcohol are not easily identifiable but the impact on health, self-evaluated by individuals, may be evaluated by the use of health survey

In fact, the review of the literature, as well as the econometric analysis based on the Health Survey for Belgium (2004) are leading to similar results.:

- moderate alcohol consumers are feeling better than people who do not drink at all
- excessive alcohol consumers and alcoholics are self evaluating their health at lower levels than those estimated by moderate consumers

A more objective estimation of the health status of the alcohol consumers may be approached by the analysis of the use of healthcare services by the different categories of alcohol consumers. This give a similar picture with the alcohol addicted persons more often hospitalized and admitted to the emergencies.

Differences are nevertheless significant between the alcohol consumers and abstinent concerning the use of emergencies services that are more often used by consumers but this category seems to be less often hospitalized.

The results of the analysis do not allow to analyze the reasons of abstinence : personal choice of medical reason ? Following the US Health Survey , only 5% of abstinent do not drink alcohol for medical reasons. The final result of our analysis seems to indicate that a moderate consumption of alcohol improves the subjective perception of their health by individuals.