# Study Links Alcohol Consumption and Cabin Pressure on Planes to Heart Health Risks



**Alcohol Consumption and Cabin Pressure on Planes May Affect Heart Health, Study Finds**

A study conducted by researchers at the Institute of Aerospace Medicine in Cologne, Germany, suggests that the combination of alcohol consumption and airplane cabin pressure could pose risks to heart health, even for young and healthy individuals.

**Study Details:**  
- **Participants:** 48 individuals aged 18 to 40.  
- **Conditions:** Participants were divided into two groups. One group slept in normal air pressure conditions, and the other slept in an altitude chamber simulating airplane cabin pressure.  
- **Scenarios:** Within each group, half of the participants consumed no alcohol while the other half drank the equivalent of two cans of beer or two glasses of wine in pure vodka before sleeping.

**Findings:**  
- In normal pressure conditions without alcohol, blood oxygen levels remained steady at around 96%, and heart rates averaged 64 bpm during sleep.  
- Among those who drank alcohol in the altitude chamber, blood oxygen levels fell to 85%, and heart rates rose to nearly 88 bpm during sleep.  
- For comparison, those in the altitude chamber who did not drink alcohol had an average blood oxygen level of 88% and a heart rate of 73 bpm.

The study revealed that alcohol intake under cabin pressure conditions significantly lowers blood oxygen levels and increases heart rates. These findings were documented in the journal "Thorax," highlighting the potential cardiovascular strain and exacerbation of symptoms in passengers with existing cardiac or pulmonary conditions. Additionally, the researchers noted that the study's results might be more pronounced for older passengers.

Given these health risks, the research team recommended reconsidering the availability of alcohol on flights, especially during long-haul journeys. The study also indicated that participants slept lying down, as in first class, suggesting that findings might vary for economy-class passengers who sleep in a sitting position.

This study underscores the importance of informing passengers, crews, and medical practitioners about the potential health risks associated with alcohol consumption during flights.