

## Vienna 2019 Abstract Submission

### Title

Assessing US Wine Consumption and Health Attitudes

### I want to submit an abstract for:

Conference Presentation

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### Keywords

wine consumption, health effects, US

### Research Question

Do attitudes that health is important or that unhealthy eating is detrimental to health affect the level or type of wine consumption?

### Methods

regression models

### Results

Preliminary results suggest that there are regional differences in wine consumption as well as health attitudes.

### Abstract

A glass of wine a day contributes to better health! Moderate consumption of alcohol is considered healthy! Red wine is good for you! These attitudes have been used to justify a daily glass of wine for decades. The pro consumption arguments include reducing the risk of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke, raising HDL (healthy) cholesterol, preventing artery damage caused by high levels of LDL (harmful) cholesterol, improving cognitive function, and promoting longevity. In addition, the fermented foods and probiotic argument that wine promotes gut health to promote disease resistance, regularity, and in general better health is also made. Of course, there is recognition that more than moderate consumption is unhealthy.

While there is some scholarly evidence to support these arguments, recent literature suggests there are differing opinions. Like many food recommendations, some have first vilified as destructive to your health (think dietary fat), then research says maybe not, and then being promoted as good for you! Rinse, repeat! While many of the pro and con arguments are supported by "scientific" studies, have these arguments affected consumer behavior? One could spend a lifetime personally testing the hypothesis that wine consumption is good for you -- we all know some

who continually test this hypothesis as well as some who refuse to engage in the experiment. Nevertheless, the question remains.

Recent consumer attitude surveys may provide an opportunity to evaluate the relationship between wine consumption and attitudes about the healthiness of their diet, fast food, calories, exercise, and eating well. Some of these studies have suggested that any or very limited alcohol consumption has detrimental long-term health effects. These studies are in stark contrast to studies that suggest long-term health benefits from moderate red wine consumption including reduced incidence of cancers, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Antidotal evidence from very aged seniors who enjoyed moderate red wine consumption also suggests there are at least some health benefits to a daily glass of red wine. However, do these studies influence or justify attitudes towards wine consumption and is this reflected in health attitudes? The results of this study may provide insights into the relationship between wine consumption and attitudes towards health.

The Simmons Respondent Level Data set provides a rich sample of US household attitudes with more than 11 million observations per year from about 24,000 households. The dataset includes information on the consumption of wine and sparkling wine including both domestic and imported, over the last 30 days. Indications of consumption by type of wine (most consumed and also consumed), and label (most consumed and also consumed) are also included. Extensive household demographic information on height, weight, education, marital status, employment status, income, type of residence, transportation options, number of children and adults, gender, etc. are included. The data set also includes responses about attitudes towards healthy eating, snacks, exercise, shopping habits, TV viewing habits, and social media habits. The responses are reported by state and media market. This dataset has been used extensively by marketers to better understand the purchasing habits of consumers as well as the effectiveness of media. A search of the economics literature indicates there has been little published economic research that utilizes this dataset, perhaps because of the volume of data, difficulty accessing the dataset, or lack of documentation.

Using data over the 2012 to 2015 period, the wine consumption responses will be regressed on demographics and respondent attitudes as well as US region or media market. Regressions by type of wine, whether it is imported or domestic and brand, will quantify wine consumer purchasing and consumption habits. These results will provide more insights, information, and perhaps understanding of the relationships between wine consumption and health related attitudes.

While this paper is a work in progress, the results will be of interest to food demand researchers and industry as well as health professionals. The results may provide insights into wine consumption and marketing. If there is a strong relationship between wine consumption and attitudes that health is important or that unhealthy eating is detrimental to health, may suggest that studies that promote moderate wine consumption have an effect, accounting for demographic, income, and household effects. There are likely regional and media market effects as well. A lack of a significant relationship would suggest that there are other factors involved such as cultural, historical, specific health issues or other unknown effects. The study may also provide insights into the relationship between wine consumption and social media, TV viewing, or reading habits. Perhaps those wine commercials during Netflix or Hulu shows or on Facebook, twitter, or other social media ads do influence wine purchases or wine consumption habits!

Nevertheless, since it is the journey that matters, further applied research is needed to test the hypothesis that a glass of wine or two a day is good for you!

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