

Beer makes you clever: official

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We already know that beer doesn't actually make you fat but rather fights cancer while promoting world peace and understanding and a brighter future for all our children.

It's no surprise then that we can now confirm what the super-intelligent if somewhat wobbly hacks at Vulture Central have known for years: alcohol makes you cleverer.

That's to say, a Swedish team has shown that mice fed with moderate amounts of alcohol grew new nerve cells in the brain. The full implications of the Karolinska Institute research - which appears in the International Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology - are unclear, but lead boffin Stefan Brene told the BBC: "We believe that the increased production of new nerve cells during moderate alcohol consumption can be important for the development of alcohol addiction and other long-term effects of alcohol on the brain."

He did, however, add that it's possible that "the extra cells might help with learning and memory" - although we reckon the word "moderate" is key here since no-one who has ever drunk 16 pints of ale has been able to recall a single detail of the session come the following morning.

A spokeswoman from Alcohol Concern concluded: "This type of study could prove useful in the long term to shed light on the relationship between alcohol intake and dependency. However, very little can be drawn from a single animal-based study at this stage. Much more research is needed to explore the relationship between drinking patterns and their effect on the human brain."

Agreed. It's Bank Holiday weekend and I'm off to do some field research. I feel cleverer already... ®

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