



“LIFESTYLE, DIET, WINE & HEALTH” 2025 CONGRESS CLOSES IN ROME FOCUS ON A NEW EUROPEAN STUDY EXPLORING THE HEALTH IMPACT OF MODERATE WINE INTAKE VERSUS ALCOHOL AVOIDANCE

Rome, 31 March 2025 – The international **Lifestyle, Diet, Wine & Health Congress** has recently concluded in Rome. Promoted by the **Wine Information Council (WiC)**, **IRVAS (Istituto per la Ricerca su Vino, Alimentazione e Salute)**, and **Wine in Moderation (WiM)**, the two-day event brought together international researchers and experts to discuss the role of healthy lifestyles, the Mediterranean diet, and moderate wine consumption in promoting public health.

One of the main highlights of this second edition was the contribution of **Prof. Miguel A. Martínez-González, Professor of Public Health at the University of Navarra** and a globally recognized figure in epidemiological research. Professor Martínez-González announced **the launch of the European UNATI study (University of Navarra Alumni Trialist Initiative)**, funded by the European Research Council (ERC): a randomized controlled intervention trial that, for the first time, will compare the health effects of total alcohol abstinence versus moderate wine consumption within a Mediterranean dietary model.

The study, currently in its initial phase, **will involve more than 10,000 adults aged 50 to 75 and aims to provide scientifically validated answers to one of the most debated questions in public health.**

"This is the world's first trial specifically designed to scientifically assess whether eliminating alcohol entirely is truly healthier than moderate wine consumption when embedded within a Mediterranean lifestyle," explained Martínez-González. "This dietary pattern, combined with healthy lifestyle habits and regular physical activity, has already been shown to significantly reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and overall mortality."

Prof. Luc Djoussé, Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and associate in nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, also made a significant contribution to the Congress. In his presentation, he emphasized that cardiovascular disease remains one of the leading causes of death and disability in developed countries, despite advances in biomedical research. He stressed the importance of identifying effective and accessible preventive strategies, highlighting that modifiable lifestyle factors such as a healthy diet, regular physical activity, adequate sleep, and moderate alcohol consumption (in the absence of contraindications) can positively influence the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and related risk factors such as type 2 diabetes, dyslipidaemia, and hypertension.

Prof. Iris Shai of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev added further insight by presenting results from randomized clinical trials conducted in Israel and other countries. Her research shows that flexible and well-structured dietary models - such as the Mediterranean diet and



the “green-MED” variant that means more polyphenols from dark leafy greens like Mankai and green tea, more walnuts and minimal red meat - can support weight loss, improve cardiometabolic health, and reduce liver fat (steatosis). She placed particular emphasis on the role of polyphenols, including those found in red wine, as bioactive compounds capable of positively modulating metabolic mechanisms.

The Congress reaffirmed that health is not determined by any single food or nutrient, but rather by the combination of informed food choices, active lifestyles, and cultural factors.

Experts stressed the importance of adopting an integrated, evidence-based approach to support healthy, active, and personalized aging. With the launch of the UNATI study, a new chapter opens for European research, one that is expected to influence future dietary guidelines and strengthen the role of the Mediterranean diet as key elements in public health promotion.

"This Congress marked a crucial moment for dialogue between science, culture, and public health," said Prof. Attilio Giacosa, President of IRVAS. "We are pleased to have contributed to creating a rigorous forum for discussion, in which wine was analysed in its natural context: that of the Mediterranean diet and balanced lifestyles. The quality of the presentations and the strength of the scientific evidence confirm the need to continue investing in nutritional research—moving beyond polarized, non-evidence-based narratives in favour of scientific, integrated, and personalized evaluation."

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