

## Could drinking alcohol have prevented cholera epidemic?

When microbiologist Janet Guthrie of Inverness, Scotland found a poster from the time of the city's early-1800s cholera outbreak, urging people to drink fermented and spirituous liquors, she found herself wondering, whether that advice was actually useful.

So, Guthrie set out to test one possible scenario, in which if all the liquid you consume is in boiled soups or spirits, you might not be exposed to cholera in the first place. While fermentation itself is likely to kill most pathogens, many alcoholic drinks have water added to them after they are produced. Guthrie ran tests, and the results were clear: All of the concentrations of alcohol she tested killed cholera. The higher the concentration of alcohol, the more quickly the cholera died.

Guthrie's study was a starting point, but, particularly in the context of the large number of other studies published in the last years and months, it begins to tell a story of cholera and alcohol and perhaps part of the story of alcohol and disease more generally. Alcohol (and presumably, although Guthrie did not test it, fermentation) can kill cholera. It seems possible individuals who drank alcohol during the cholera outbreak may have been less likely to die of cholera. Elsewhere, a study of wine and cholera in France in the 1900s found those individuals who consumed wine tended to be more likely to be spared. Nor is that the end of the story. Other studies have also shown that tequila that is 10 percent alcohol can kill salmonella, shigella and *E. coli* (all implicated in Montezuma's revenge as well as other maladies).

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Strong Medicine: Drinking Wine and Beer Can Help Save You from Cholera, Montezuma's Revenge, E. Coli and Ulcers 1](#)**