



Proven science: Guys can't tell 3.8 from 5.3 'Pour' students prove less alcohol doesn't lessen the fun

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What a way to spend an evening: Drink free beer and tell researchers how good you feel afterwards.

Scholars at the University of Victoria have discovered that beer drinkers don't really know what they're drinking.

A survey of male students found they couldn't tell the difference between low- alcohol beer (at 3.8 per cent) and regular Canadian strength (at 5.3 per cent).

Researcher Dave Segal said the study group of 34 men "reported no differences in how much they enjoyed the occasion or their perceived intoxication."

"They had fun, listened to music and played dominoes," Segal said in an interview yesterday.

"Blood-alcohol levels were markedly reduced with the low-alcohol beer."

A patron at Steamworks Brew pub in Vancouver supported the findings.

"You really can't tell the difference in range of alcohol unless it starts hitting six per cent," said Robert Farnan.

"I can't understand why [North American brewers] can't make a low-alcohol beer that has great taste."

UVic researchers say the provincial government should modify pricing policies to make buying low-alcohol beer more attractive.

"Increased consumption of alcohol has led to increases in cancers, liver diseases, road trauma, violence and birth defects," said Dr. Tim Stockwell of UVic's Centre for Addictions Research.

Segal said there are few low-alcohol beers in B.C.

"Australia has found ways to achieve harm reduction by increasing the market share of low-alcohol beer through tax incentives," Segal said.

The UVic addiction centre plans to meet with provincial government officials to discuss its proposal.

A copy of Segal's report is available on the web at <http://carbc.ca/>.

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