

Media Release



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For Immediate Release

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING?

Lawson researcher cautions excessive fluid intake

LONDON, Ontario – You can never have too much of a good thing, or so the saying goes. In the case of fluids, such as drinking water, researchers are discovering the opposite is true. Published this week in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, Dr. William Clark, Scientist at Lawson Health Research Institute, has found that excessive fluid intake can lead to proteinuria, or protein in the urine. Proteinuria is known for causing kidney failure and has also been associated with cardiovascular disease - damaged blood vessels can lead to heart failure or stroke.

Proteinuria is often a side effect for individuals suffering from kidney disease, diabetes mellitus, or hemolytic uremic syndrome. As part of a screening study to assess the long-term health outcomes in residents of Walkerton, Ontario following the water contamination in 2000, Dr. Clark and his team of Walkerton *E.coli* Long-Term (WEL) investigators came across some significant findings. One hundred adults were identified with having proteinuria and polyuria (frequent urination), but had no medical history or medication use to explain their condition. Of the 100 individuals, 56 were then instructed to reduce their daily fluid intake to less than eight large glasses (2-litres) per day for one week. Results showed that the proteinuria and polyuria were largely reversed. "These individuals were causing their condition from excessive water drinking," commented Dr. Clark. "The treatment was simple – when the patients drank less water, we saw the condition go away."

When asked about their fluid consumption, the 56 participants indicated that they were drinking large volumes of fluid because they perceived it to be a healthy lifestyle choice. And why would they think otherwise? Water when consumed in moderation has many purported health benefits including boosting energy levels, removing toxins from the body and aiding in weight loss. It has been suggested that the water contamination in Walkerton, as well as the temporary shift to bottled water, may have led some of these individuals to assume a habit of over consumption; however, most participants admitted to drinking large volumes of fluid prior to the contamination crisis.

"It is unknown at this time whether the reversible proteinuria associated with large fluid intake in these otherwise healthy people could affect their kidney function in the long term," said Dr. Clark. "Until such data is available from our longitudinal study, it may be advisable to discourage otherwise healthy people from consuming large volumes of fluid."

Dr. Clark is the Project Leader of the Walkerton *E.coli* Long-Term study (WEL). He is also a Nephrologist at London Health Sciences Centre and Professor at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at The University of Western Ontario.

About Lawson Health Research Institute

As the research institute of London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care, London, and working in partnership with The University of Western Ontario, Lawson Health Research Institute is committed to furthering scientific knowledge to advance health care around the world.

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