

## **Health scare of the week**

### **Alcohol's impact on memory**

Everyone knows that heavy drinking can lead to a hazy recollection of the previous night's events. New research indicates that it may also lead to increased memory problems later in life. English researchers questioned 6,542 middle-aged adults about their drinking history and then assessed their mental abilities over a period of 19 years. They found that people who had suffered from a drinking problem at some point in their lives—defined as those who answered yes to at least two of four alcoholism-related questions—were more than twice as likely to struggle on word-recall tests and other cognitive assessments. “We already know there is an association between dementia risk and levels of current alcohol consumption,” researcher Iain Lang told *HuffingtonPost.com*. Now we have insights into “the relatively unknown association between having a drinking problem at any point in life and experiencing problems with memory later in life.” The researchers will next try to establish to what extent it matters when in middle age the heavy drinking occurs.