

Dear Honourable Senators of Ontario,

I'm a Radiation Oncologist in Oshawa, ON. Myself and numerous other colleagues from multiple medical specialties strongly support cancer warning labels on alcoholic beverages. Alcohol causes cancer. It is a fact. I could bombard you with decades of data, but presumably by now you've heard the relevant statistics as it had decent news coverage with the new low risk guidelines. Instead, here are some Ontarians I've met recently – sufficiently vague to protect confidentiality, but they're all real.

- A single mother in her mid-30s now dying of breast cancer and trying to sort out who is going to look after her child
- Two mid-thirties women I met with the same first name, in the same week, and nearly exactly the same advanced colorectal cancer diagnoses. One recently had a child, one was in the process of trying to start a family.
- A middle aged high-level professional who delayed having children to pursue her career. She was in tears with her breast cancer diagnosis worried she wouldn't live to see her kids grow up. She had a history of 1-2 glasses of wine with dinner to "de-stress from a hard work day"
- A mid-40s lady who I talked to about her rapidly advancing breast cancer, she'll die in about a year, maybe two. She wants to spend time with her family while she can.

I've chosen the younger, more distressing cases to write down – so that you hear their voices in some fashion. There are numerous others who have curable or otherwise 'regular' fatal cancers who didn't stick as much in my mind over these last few months like the examples above. This is not to dismiss any of them – there are just way too many to list out.

These are real people I see every day, not statistics on a piece of paper. I can't say for sure that alcohol caused their specific cancer, but I know it's a risk factor, and nearly all of them didn't know at the time they were drinking. By the time I'm telling them alcohol is a known carcinogen, it's really too late to make a big difference. Mostly they've had decades of exposure already. Had labels been enacted as recommended by the Canadian Medical Association back in 1991, an entire generation would already have grown up with knowledge that continues to be actively suppressed by industry.

Would people have made a different decision about their consumption had they known? Maybe. Evidence says they would likely cut back.

What's the cut-off where the risk becomes relevant? 5%? 0.1%? That's not up to me to decide. It's certainly not up to industry to say the absolute risk is too small to warrant warnings.

The fact remains alcohol is a carcinogen and every individual consumer should be aware of that with a label on the product. Alcoholic beverages are a glaring hole in Canadian product labelling. It's up to the consumer to decide what risk they are willing to accept.

Thank you  
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