

An Evaluation of Epidemiology Studies of Coffee Consumption and Cancer

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SUMMARY

The published data for epidemiology studies relating to coffee consumption and human cancer are reviewed for four organ sites, breast, colon, ovary and pancreas. For each organ site, the data were aggregated using the descriptive procedure of Peto. For breast cancer 10 studies were evaluated and the combined relative risk was 1.08, with a range from 0.6 to 1.26. For colon cancer (15 studies), the combined relative risk for cancer was 0.72, with a range from 0.5 to 2.0. For pancreas (16 studies), the combined relative risk was 1.22, with a range from 0.6 to 1.6. For cancer of the ovary in 7 studies, the combined relative risk was 1.4, with a range of 1.0 to 2.2. Thus, for breast and colon the data clearly show no increased cancer risk associated with coffee consumption, and for colon there is evidence for a protective effect. For ovary and pancreas, the small increase in the calculated relative risk, taken with the large ranges, including relative risks of 1.0 or lower in some studies, strongly suggests that coffee consumption is not linked causally to cancer occurrence at these sites.