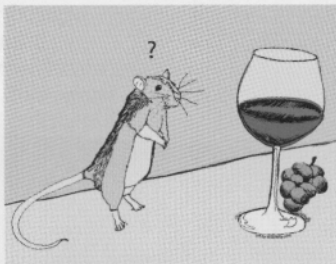


WHAT WAS SAID:

A new study shows that red wine can help obese people manage their health and weight, or so say outlets such as the Huffington Post, *The Telegraph*, *New York*, and others. London's *Independent* wrote, "Drinking red wine could help overweight people burn fat better and improve liver function, scientists in the U.S. have claimed." But if you ask Neil Shay, a professor at Oregon State University and one of the study's three main authors, he'll tell you no such thing.

WHAT THE STUDY SAID:

The study—which aimed to identify specific metabolism-boosting antioxidants in grapes and examine their effect on fat and liver cells—was conducted on obese mice. The researchers didn't give the mice wine or grape juice; they added a powdered, concentrated extract of antioxidants from muscadine grapes to mouse food. The study found that mice that were fed high-fat chow with the extracts had less fat in their livers—but they weren't significantly slimmer than the control group. To study the effects of the antioxidants on individual cells, the researchers grew human stem cells from fat tissue in cocktails of antioxidants. They found that one in particular—ellagic acid—was the most effective at blocking fat formation.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE:

While the study did identify fat-fighting chemicals in muscadine grapes, it's too soon to be prescribing overweight individuals a treatment course of red wine. Aside from the fact that mice aren't humans, a concentrated extract of antioxidants from fruit is not wine. In fact, most of the ellagic acid in grapes precipitates out during the winemaking process, according to Shay, and grapes are packed with sugars. Moreover, as Fox News reminded readers, "a full glass of wine contains around 150 calories, and there's never a benefit to overdoing it." Sorry, oenophiles: Cutting alcohol is still more effective than boozing your way to weight loss.