Expensive and inexpensive wines taste the same, research shows

April 15 2011, By Maroulla Georgiou

(PhysOrg.com) -- Psychologist Prof Richard Wiseman (University of Hertfordshire) today revealed the results of The Taste Test - a large-scale experiment to discover whether expensive wines are good value for money. The experiment was carried out as part of the Edinburgh International Science Festival and involved over 400 members of the public tasting either an expensive or inexpensive wine, and then trying to tell which was which.

The inexpensive wines cost less than £5 per bottle, and the expensive ones were priced between £10 and £30. The experimenters tested a mixture of red and white wines from various countries, including Sauvignon Blanc, Rioja, Claret and Champagne.

The test was conducted 'double-blind', with neither the tasters nor experimenters knowing the cost of the wine. By chance the volunteers would have correctly classified their wine as expensive or inexpensive 50% of the time. Volunteers' actual accuracy was exactly at chance, demonstrating that they could not distinguish between the two types of wine by taste alone.

"These are remarkable results," commented Wiseman. "People were unable to tell expensive from inexpensive wines, and so in these times of financial hardship the message is clear - the inexpensive wines we tested taste the same as their expensive counterparts."

The Edinburgh International Science Festival runs from 9 to 22 April

2011 with over 200 events in 30 venues across the city.

Provided by University of Hertfordshire

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