

A MIXED HAZARD? ALCOHOL, CAFFEINATED ENERGY DRINKS AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF CO-INGESTION

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Alcohol mixed with energy drinks (AmED) is an increasingly popular consumption trend generating concern amongst researchers, health professionals, and policy-makers. Energy drinks are beverages advertised as enhancing energy, alertness and performance. It has been theorised that the stimulant effects of the energy drink mask the depressant effects of alcohol, altering the nature of intoxication to cause a state of 'wide-awake drunkenness'. This state is thought to lead to changes in the intensity of intoxication (specifically, a reduced perception of intoxication) and increased alcohol-related harms. Alongside increasing calls for regulation of marketing and sale of energy drinks in the past decade, there has been an increasing number of studies conducted investigating these hypotheses, as well as identifying the consumption patterns and motivations for AmED use. Key gaps in the literature which have recently been addressed include (i) within-subject research assessing intoxication outcomes after AmED versus alcohol to determine whether consumers experience additional alcohol-related harms from co-ingestion, and (ii) experimental laboratory-based controlled research objectively assessing AmED and alcohol intoxication outcomes to examine the pharmacological effects of co-ingestion. As such, this presentation will overview recent research which i) identifies consumption patterns and motivations for use, and ii) clarifies the effects of the combined beverage on the nature and intensity of intoxication.

Disclosure of Interest Statement

Dr Peacock was provided with placebo samples by Red Bull for an experimental study in 2011; no financial support was provided and this organisation had no involvement in design, interpretation, or reporting of the work.