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**ANALYSIS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ENERGY DRINKS (E.D.)**  
**CONSUMPTION IN FUTURE JOURNALISTS**

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***Abstract***

Objective: To study the consume of energy drinks (ED) by journalism students to establish the tendencies and its consequences in a professional group with high levels of stress. Making conscious the future journalists about the risk they are expose and their duty to inform society about this problem. Method: It was made a survey to last year journalism students in different Spanish universities about their relation with energy drinks, comparing it with similar studies from other parts of the world. Results: The huge amount of consume is globalized even in the most consumed brands. The youth knows about the damages for their health but they continue consuming it, which may have irreparable consequences to their journalistic labor. The role of publicity is to transform energy drinks in to healthy products with mottos like “Red Bull gives you wings” or promotions in extreme sports with influencers selling a kind of values like tobacco companies did when they could appear in publicity.

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## **1. Introduction**

All along humanity history drinks to achieve more energy and avoid tiredness have been consumed. From tea, coffee and its derivatives to chocolate. But now a day, it is trend to consume stronger drinks than before and less naturals without studying health consequences. Some producers like Monster say that: Monster is not an energy drink, it is a way of life (González, 2013).

The first country where energy drinks were sold was Austria with Red Bull in 1987, it arrived later to the United States in 1997. Red Bull, one of the leading brands of energy drinks, was first introduced in Austria in 1987 and the United States in 1997, and since then the energy drink market has grown tremendously (Seifert, Schaechter, Hershorin, & Lipshultz, 2018), but the first intent to release an energy drink was in 1945 by the name Enuf in the USA. It was made with a lot of vitamins and was recommended as the best alternative to traditional soda drinks.

Their success is based on an objective audience, the youth, who looks for a balance between their personal life and their job, and so they need a drink for the new times, and for that it must be really energetic. Now a day, there are lots of ED brands in every single country where these are consumed, without counting white label from big supermarkets. A perfect production and distribution has been achieved, but there isn't an agreement about the danger that exist by no establishing a regulation about their consumption, nor either about the information which must appear at the labels from the different brands. That suppose the risk of not knowing what we are consuming.

Each brand use different amounts of caffeine - 4 or 5 times superior than regular drinks – and also other ingredients like carnitine, guarana, taurine, ginseng. Producing complications like headache, dizziness, heart issues. It achieves the worst consequences when it is mixed with alcohol, because the previous risks are multiplied and appear new disorders for the cardiovascular system, the renal, the muscle, and the central nervous system. It exists cases where the consumer has died because of the consumption. This was signalized almost a decade ago by Heckman, Sherry, & De Mejia (2010).

## **2. Research Methods**

It was made a survey with 12 questions about the consumption of energy drinks to 100 journalism students from different Spanish universities. There were also compared to other similar studies from other countries in universities and adolescents to prove if the energy drinks consumption is similar in all the countries and analyze the possible cycle of consumption by ages.

## **3. Findings**

### **3.1. ED's consumers gender**

This first fact is very disturbing. The number of women who consume energy drinks is superior to the number of men. In women, it is a 58.6% and in men 41.4%. It has been proven that women have a superior consume of highly dangerous product as tobacco and alcohol. Adding a new risky factor like ED consumption may produce serious consequences.

### **3.2. ED's consumers age**

The 97% between 18 and 30, what we can call the youth, is the principal consumer. They are followed by adults who stay in a more illness risky age, 2% are between 31 and 40 years old. And finally, 1% is between 41 and 50 years.

### **3.3. People who consume ED**

As we could observe, only 38.4 of the respondents affirm to consume energy drinks. Therefore, more than the 50% of the future journalist interviewed don't consume energy drinks (61.6%).

### **3.4. Most consumed brands**

For 38.4% of the respondents who affirm to consume energy drinks: 78.9% consume Red Bull, 55.3% consume Monster Energy, 34.2% consume Burn, 7.9% consume RockStar, Energy Drink and 5.3% consume other brands energy drinks.

As we can see, the three more consumed brands are Red Bull, Monster and Burn. They are the most popular brands because of their television publicity. It is well known the motto "Red Bull gives you wings" or Monster as the sponsor of the MotoGP motorcycle road racer Jorge Lorenzo, he is an influencer in motorcycle world. As González (2013) said: "*For Monster Energy, the consumers are divided in four groups: motorsport, actionsport, music and life style*".

### **3.5. Amount consumed**

Of 38.4% respondents who affirm to consume energy drinks: 97.2% consume between 1 and 2 cans a day, while 2.8% consume between 2 and 3 cans. As we can observe, in no case the respondents pass the 3 daily cans. As it was for the tobacco companies it doesn't matter the number of consumers, what really matters is their quality, being big consumers.

### **3.6. Reasons why these drinks are consumed**

For 38.4% respondents who affirm to consume energy drinks: 48.7% affirm do it because they like it and/or it serves them to be awake, 30.8% consume ED to study para and 10.3% do it to work better at job.

As we can see, there is a tie between the consumption for pleasure and the consumption for being awake. These two options represent almost 50% of the reasons to consume. The second reason in the ranking, with 30%, is for studying. Only 10,3% do it to operate better at job.

The strategy for introducing energy drinks is similar to the strategy used by the tobacco companies between the 20's and 60's. Between the 1920s and the 1960s American tobacco companies sponsored extensive advertising campaigns to promote cigarettes to colleges students. These efforts include advertisements in campus newspaper, on campus promotions, sponsorship of athletic events (particularly football) and advertisements in game day program (Crisp & Jefferson, 2014).

### **3.7. ED's consumers starting age**

Of the 39 people who affirm to consume energy drinks, 76.9% answered they start consuming them at the adolescence. This percentage goes followed by a 17,9% of people in an average of age between 21

and 25 years old. We see that the consume is place in a young bar and it is reduced while the person grows up. That's a usual tendency in a new product.

### **3.8. Side effects after consuming them**

Despite of the studies that prove some of the side effects caused after the consumption of these drinks, of the group who take these substances, the highest percentage affirm they haven't experiment any side effect (46.2%). Most frequently consequences experimented by the consumers are: insomnia, nervousness, palpitations, hypertension and anxiety. At 2012, there appeared some publications which dared to report these negative effects:

*"Energy drinks are readily available to students and pose potential health risk. Students who report greater energy drink consumption also consume alcohol, are more likely to mix energy drinks and alcohol, and experience heavy episodes of drinking, which is problematic given the potential negative consequences of these drinks". (Cayley-Velazquez, Poulos, Latimer, & Pasch, 2012)*

At 2014 appeared the consequences of the consumption of E.D. The present study suggest that the energy drink consumption is associated with weight loss attempts and disordered eating behaviors. Future research is needed to examine the prevalence of energy drink consumption for weight loss and how this related to additional weight loss behaviors. Research should also examine the type of energy drink consumed (egg, regular or sugar -free), and how often individuals engage in this particular behaviour (Jeffers & Vatalaro Hill, & Benotsch, 2014).

### **3.9. Possible symptoms before E.D.'s consumption**

Of the 37 people who has answered to this question, 78.4% affirm haven't got those symptoms before consuming energy drinks, against 21.6%. The first symptoms are related with the heart.

*Healthy adults who consumed energy drinks had significantly increased heart contraction rates one hour later" ", Researcher used cardiac MRI on 18 healthy volunteer before and after consuming an energy drink containing taurine and caffeine", "Cardiac MR images obtained one hour after volunteer consumed the energy drink revealed significantly increased contraction rates in the left ventricle". Further studies are needed to evaluate the impact of long-term energy drink consumption and the effect of such drinks on individuals. (Heckman et al., 2010, p. 27)*

Public opinion is wrong by thinking the real prejudice of these drinks is the caffeine. There are more unknown and damaging ingredients. "The results we report exclude caffeine as the ingredient that improves endothelial function in ED. Coffee and 5-hours Energy have approximately the same caffeine content. Energy significantly improved it. Red Bull has the smallest caffeine content of the drinks studied with a significant positive effect on endothelial function. NOS has approximately half the caffeine content as coffee used in our study and showed no improvement in endothelial function. Given the lack of improvement in endothelial function with coffee, the effect of 5-hours Energy and Red Bull is probably because of ingredients other than caffeine that include taurine, glucur-onolactone, niacine, ginseng and guarana. Future studies may elucidate the effects of these components.

### **3.10. Number of people who combine energy drinks with alcohol**

75% of the respondents has ever combine alcohol with energy drinks. It is unknown that mixing stimulants (Red Bull and its derivatives) with depressants (alcohol) is not recommended because its side effects. Last studies affirm that the consumption of energy drinks with alcohol is a “lethal bomb” that attacks, among other organs, the liver, turning some areas in to non-regenerative. The consequences of consuming this kind of drinks during the youth can be noticed just in a year.

Individuals who reported combining alcohol and energy drinks had more positive attitudes and beliefs about AmED use, higher perceived peer norms of others use, and stronger intentions toward future use compared to students who did not consume AmEDs. These students also reported significantly higher rates of alcohol consumption and related consequences during the first year of college.

The combination between E.D. and alcohol is coming in to colleges: AmEd use appears to be highly prevalent among college students, and AmED use may confer additional risk beyond hazardous drinking in terms of unprotected sex. Unprotected sex among college students has public health implications for the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and unplanned pregnancy. Finally, premixed AmED use accounted for a relatively smaller proportion of total AmED use. In light of this, further discussion on the part of policymakers is warranted as to the highly prevalent consumption of AmED and to the potential risks of mixing alcohol with caffeine (Berger, Fendrich, & Fuhrmann, 2013).

The problem is that E.D. and alcohol combination is, in some cases, the beginning of consuming other drugs by the youth. The combined use of caffeine and alcohol is increasing sharply; which studies suggest may increase the rate of alcohol-related injury. Given that clinical pharmacology and epidemiological studies demonstrate an association of caffeine use with dependence on alcohol, nicotine, and other drugs, and one study showed that energy drinks use predicts subsequent nonmedical use of prescription stimulants, further study of whether energy drink use serves as a gateway to other forms of drug dependence is warranted (Chad-Reisig, Strain, & Griffiths, 2009).

### **3.11. Consideration about whether energy drinks are natural or healthy**

95% of the requested thinks that energy drinks are not healthy. It proves that, even if the consumers are aware about the possible side effects, they continue consuming. Therefore, it isn't the ignorance what suppose its consumption. There exist several studies which particularize its positive and negative aspects, the truth is that the lack of information to consumers is denounced:

*“Current policy and regulatory frameworks regarding ED and AED do little to advise the general public about responsible consumption or to protect vulnerable groups from the harms that can arise from their widespread use. While the majority may use these products responsibly, there is emerging evidence of increasing incidents of acute poisoning. As well as better informing consumers, specific regulation for AED would potentially simplify labelling requirements for manufacturers”.* (Cowie & Bolam, 2015, p. 207)

But the negative aspects do not only affect the youth. They affect in different ways depending on age, as well as the youth almost adults (young adults).

*“Despite these limitations, the present study contributes to the literature on AmED-related adverse outcomes. AmED consumers appear more likely to use cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamine, as well as engage in unprotected sex, sex after drug use, and sex after too much drink. Results of this study also suggest the need to evaluate the measurement of AmED consumption when implementing interventions with young adults. Young adults are at an increased risk for negative sexual outcomes; understanding factors associated with high-risk sexual behavior and drug use among these individuals provides important information for future prevention efforts”.* (Damiel, Snipes, & Benotsch, 2013, p. 122)

### **3.12. E.D. consumption at the journalistic labor**

Between journalists, the usual consumption of this kind of substance is not clear yet. 55% believe it is usual, against 45%. After the graphic analyze, it isn't possible to generalize the energy drinks consumption exclusively to journalists because of the tight result, it embraces a wider ambit.

## **4. Conclusion**

As we can observe, the consume of energy drinks is more frequent between the youth. The age when they are started to be taken is also early: between 15 and 20 years old. Coinciding with the age at which young people know their first drunkenness.

The female gender is the bigger E.D.'s consumer. That must have really serious consequences for women because it is added to the alcohol and tobacco where women have overcome the forecasts.

61.6% doesn't consume, which is a really positive fact for mass media professionals, who are exposed to a high level of stress, and its consequences.

The most known brand is Red Bull and Monster, curiously the ones with more publicity. And also, they are the ones who better sell freedom giving wings and, like Monster, bringing motorcycling influencers. They are the first brand in countries like Pakistan.

Energy drinks (E.D.) consume is not generalized, but it is really high between the people who consume them. This fact coincides with the tobacco consumers, being their risk as well in a long term.

Regarding its consumption, almost half say that they consume it for its flavor and the other half for working reasons such as being more awake or being more productive. From Pakistan, Seville to Australia, everyone says the same.

The side effects after the consumption agreed with the answers and the studies made to young people in other countries. From Israel, New Zealand to USA.

78.45% sustain they didn't have previous symptoms before consuming this kind of drinks. That could support the indications that say its consumption isn't healthy. Moreover, most of the consumers were familiar with similar drinks with a high content of substances such as caffeine.

The most worrying fact is that 75% has ever combined it with alcohol. This leads us in to require: a greater transparency in the content of these drinks, a more severe regulation, advertising campaigns beginning in schools to avoid superior damages.

Finally, 95% seems to know they are not healthy, but they keep on consuming without fear.

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