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ASSESSMENT OF THE BENEFITS AND HARMS OF ENERGY DRINKS IN MODERN SOCIETY

Niyazova O. A.

Bositkhonova R. Sh.

Rakhimzhanova I. I.

Tashkent State Medical University

Abstract

Energy drinks are among the most popular products among young people and people experiencing intense psycho-emotional and physical stress. Their increasing consumption has attracted the attention of specialists in the fields of medicine, hygiene, and public health. This article analyzes a student survey. The majority of respondents consume energy drinks, and the reasons for this are presented.

Keywords: Energy drinks, students, risk, performance.

Introduction

In recent decades, energy drink consumption has steadily increased worldwide, particularly among teenagers and young adults. Active advertising, product availability, and a variety of flavors and formats have contributed to a growing interest in this soft drink category. The most vulnerable consumer group is students, who face high academic workloads, a hectic lifestyle, disrupted sleep patterns, and the need to balance study with work.

Energy drinks are non-alcoholic stimulants containing caffeine, taurine, B vitamins, guarana and ginseng extracts, and significant amounts of sugar or sugar substitutes. The primary claimed effect of these drinks is increased alertness, concentration, and performance. However, alongside these supposed positive

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effects, the scientific literature is increasingly discussing the potential adverse effects of their regular consumption: sleep disturbances, increased heart rate, irritability, psychological dependence, and potential effects on the cardiovascular and nervous systems.

The problem is particularly pressing among students, who often use energy drinks to combat fatigue while preparing for exams, completing coursework, and during exam periods. Forming a habit of consuming these drinks during adolescence can lead to regular, even daily, consumption.

Therefore, it is important to study the prevalence of energy drink consumption among students, their frequency of use, brand preferences, age of onset, motivation for use, subjective assessment of effectiveness, and identification of possible side effects. The data obtained allow us to assess the scale of the problem, identify risk factors, and justify the need for preventive measures aimed at fostering a health-conscious attitude.

The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics of energy drink consumption among students, as well as to assess their subjective impact on well-being and performance.

Materials and methods of research

This study conducted a survey among students at Tashkent State Medical University. A total of 130 students, ranging from first- to third-year students, participated. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions covering the frequency and prevalence of energy drink consumption, as well as attitudes toward energy drinks.

Research results and their discussion

The survey revealed that 51.1% of students consume energy drinks (Figure 1). Of these, 52.9% consume energy drinks 1-2 times a month, 11.7% 3-4 times a

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week, 15.6% 1-2 times a week, 5.8% every other day, and the remaining 13.7% consume these drinks every day.

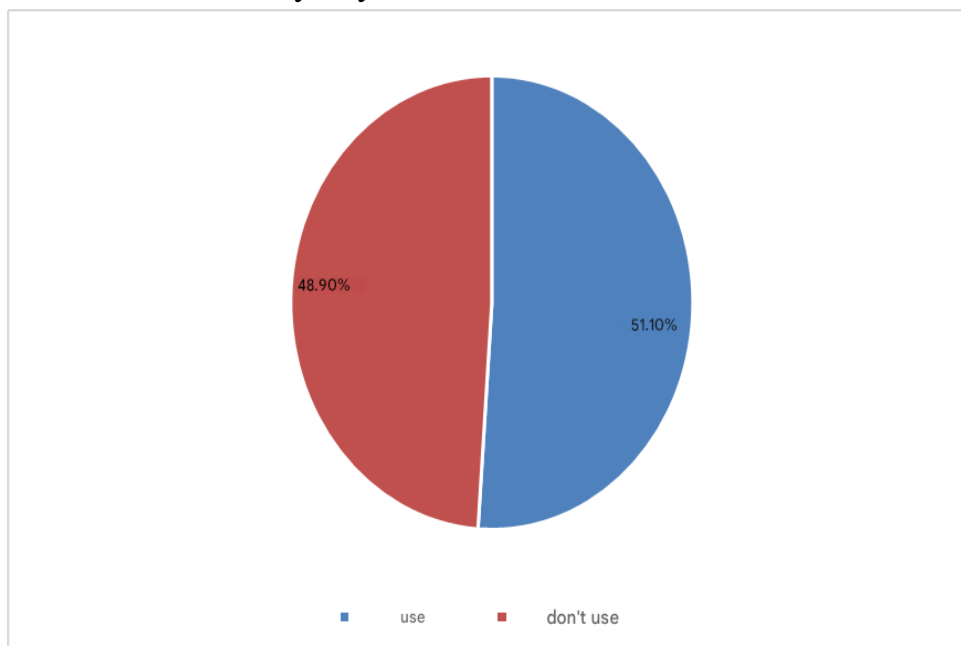


Figure 1. Energy drink consumption by students.

27.4% of students prefer to drink the drink “Flash”, 21.5% - “Gorilla”, 17.6% - “Red Bull”, 15.6% - “18+”, 7.8% - “Lit Energy”, 5.8% - “Adrenaline Rush”, the remaining 3.9% - other brands of energy drinks.

During the study, it was found that 21.5% of respondents began drinking these drinks at the age of 14, 41.7% at the age of 15-17, 29.4% at the age of 18-20, and the remaining 7.8% of people who participated in the survey were over 20 years old.

When asked “Why do you drink energy drinks?” 35.2% answered “to stay awake” (during study, work, etc.), 29.4% answered that they drink to improve concentration and energy, 21.5% of respondents said they like the taste, and the remaining 13.9% of students said they drink for other reasons.

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Do they notice the effect of vigor. After consuming energy drinks, 31.3% of students responded that they always felt a surge of energy, while another 31.3% stated that they experienced no effect. 37.2% of respondents responded that the effect sometimes occurred.

After consuming energy drinks, 23.5% of respondents reported increased heart rate, 19.6% experienced sleep disturbances, and 13.7% experienced irritability. The majority of students (56.8%) did not notice any side effects after consuming these drinks.

43.2% of respondents think that these drinks increase performance only slightly, 24.7% believe that they contribute greatly to this, and 32.1% deny this opinion.

Conclusions

More than half of the students surveyed (51.1%) consume energy drinks, indicating the high prevalence of this practice among students. A significant proportion of students consume energy drinks regularly, which can be considered a health risk factor. Most respondents began drinking energy drinks between the ages of 15 and 17 (41.7%) and 14 (21.5%), indicating that this habit developed early.

Conclusion

A study found that energy drink consumption is common among students, often beginning in adolescence. The primary motivation for their consumption is to maintain alertness and concentration under intense academic pressure.

However, subjective assessments of the effectiveness of energy drinks remain controversial: a significant portion of students either report no significant effect or consider it insignificant. At the same time, some respondents reported adverse reactions involving the cardiovascular and nervous systems, indicating potential health risks with regular consumption.

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The data obtained indicate the need for preventive and educational work among students aimed at informing them about the possible consequences of excessive consumption of energy drinks, developing a culture of rational work and rest regimes, and popularizing safe ways to maintain performance.

Thus, the problem of energy drink consumption by students has medical and social significance and requires further in-depth study in order to develop effective preventive measures.

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