

Alcohol and Caffeine: A Dangerous Mix Popular Among Students

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Submitted by Rasik Sharma on Fri, 10/22/2010 - 13:23 Health TNM



The growing popularity of caffeinated alcoholic beverages among collegeaged drinks in the last few years is causing concern among health officials, politicians and college administrators.

Beverages such as Four Loko, a premixed alcoholic energy drink, get their drinkers heavily intoxicated quite quickly. The opposing effects of

caffeine and alcohol are increasingly related to health problems, such as heart attacks.

Research conducted by Kathleen E. Miller at the State University of New York at Buffalo, found that students consuming energy drinks with or without alcohol are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviour, such as drug use, smoking or binge drinking. This correlation has led Ms. Miller to describe energy drink consumption as a "red-flag behaviour".

In a 2008 survey, Ms. Miller found that 26% of public university undergraduates reported consuming energy drinks mixed with alcohol in the past month. About 50% said they'd done so more than once.

The growing concern surrounding these drinks has led to them being banned in Ramapo College this month. These efforts have curbed their consumption, but are not expected to eliminate them completely.

These drinks have also entered the Government's list of concerns. Last November, the Food and Drug Administration threatened to ban them if manufacturers failed to prove that they were safe for consumption. FDA Press Officer Michael L. Herndon says that the agency has received 19 responses from 27 manufacturers and distributors, and that testing will begin to determine whether caffeine can safely and lawfully be added to alcoholic beverages.

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