

## Use and Health Effects of Caffeinated Beverages in Omani Students

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**Abstract :** The increased use of caffeinated beverages and energy drink is posing threat to all ages and gender especially, younger adults. There is a lack of scientific evidence in Oman regarding caffeine and energy drink consumption. Our study aims to demonstrate the prevalence, pattern, knowledge and awareness, and side effects of caffeine intake among university students. This cross-sectional study including (N=365) apparently healthy male and female Omani university students aged 18-30 years, was carried out from February 2018-June 2018. A self-administered questionnaire with various sections was used to obtain information. The prevalence of caffeinated beverage consumption was commonly high among participants (97%). The males preferred Nescafe, coffee (both  $p < 0.001$ ), espresso ( $p < 0.022$ ), and soda ( $p < 0.008$ ) while females consumed more tea ( $p < 0.029$ ). The awareness about negative health impact of caffeine intake was significantly higher in females rather than males ( $p < 0.002$ ). The overall prevalence of energy drink consumption was 42.1% (n=149), and higher in males (75%,  $p < 0.001$ ). More males consumed 3-5 and  $> 5$  cans/day while females used 1-2 cans/day. The starting age of energy drink use was higher in females (16-20 years (51.1%)) as compared to males (11-15 years (33.3%)). Females were more aware of caffeine as energy drink ingredient ( $p < 0.036$ ) than males. The major source of information about energy drink was family and friends (58.3%). Red Bull was the commonly used brand (55.5%) among participants. Common reasons for high energy drink consumption were energy boost (68.4 %), taste (62.9%), reduce fatigue (52.1%), and better performance (47.3%). Females reported breathing problem, and abnormal heart beat ( $p < 0.004$ , 0.054, respectively), while more males reported irritability than females ( $p < 0.052$ ). The prevalence of caffeinated beverage and energy drink consumption is high among participants. The awareness, and knowledge among university student is not satisfactory and needs immediate action to avoid excess use of such consumption.

**Keywords :** energy drink, caffeinated beverages, awareness, Oman

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