

## The relationship between consumption of cola-like drinks and of other stimulants among adolescents and young adults

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**Abstract** – *Introduction.* Recent years have seen increased consumption of cola-like drinks, energy drinks, coffee and tea among adolescents and young adults. This may have a negative impact on their health due to an excess intake of caffeine. Caffeine can also contribute to the increased consumption of alcohol and to cigarette smoking. The aim of this research was to evaluate the relationship between the frequency of cola-like drinks consumption and of other stimulants (including coffee, tea, alcohol, energy drinks and cigarettes) among adolescents and young adults.

*Methods.* Purposely selected 118 respondents (persons aged 13–30 years), that declared frequent consumption of cola-like drinks participated in the study. The whole group was divided into two sub-groups – adolescent (n = 65) and young adults (n = 53). The author's own questionnaire was used and statistical analysis was developed using the statistical package SPSS 18 and AMOS 18. The method of structural equation modeling (SEM) was used.

*Results.* Consumption of cola in adolescents had an indirect effect on alcohol consumption, while in young adults that effect was direct. Consumption of energy drinks directly influenced alcohol consumption among adolescents and cigarette smoking among young adults. Smoking directly influenced the frequency of alcohol consumption in adolescents, while an inverse relationship was shown among adult. The direct impact of coffee consumption on alcohol consumption was observed only among young people.

*Conclusions.* Our results showed an important relationships between the parallel consumption of various stimulants and the need for monitoring caffeine intake among adolescents and young adults, as well as the need for more education targeting both groups in order to avoid consumption of high doses of caffeine.

**Key words:** alcohol, caffeine, stimulants, youth

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, attention has been drawn to the negative impact of chronic use of beverages containing caffeine, especially energy drinks, cola, tea and coffee on the health of young people (1–3). Caffeine is also regarded as a psychoactive substance that can also generate risks of addiction (4).

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Financial support: research financed from own authors resources

No conflict of interest declared