

Public Abstract

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Title: A Study of NCAA Division I Athletes on the Use and Effects of Combining Alcohol & Energy Drinks

In recent years, the use of energy drinks alone and the combined use of alcohol and energy drinks has become increasingly popular (Ferreira et al., 2006, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c). Researchers have suggested that it is important to examine the combined use of energy drinks and alcohol as it may lead to an increase in risk taking behaviors such as drinking and driving and increased alcohol consumption (Ferreira et al., 2006; Riesselmann et al., 1996). As a whole, college students have been identified as an at risk population for problems associated with alcohol. Within this group of at-risk drinkers, athletes have been identified as the heaviest users and to be the most at-risk for serious problems associated with alcohol (Leichliter et al., 1998; Nelson & Wechsler, 2001; Wechsler et al., 1997). Furthermore, research has shown that college athletes participate in more alcohol risk taking behaviors and experience more negative consequences than other college students (Leichliter et al., 1998; Wechsler et al., 1994, 1995, 1997; Nattiv & Puffer, 1991).

While athlete alcohol consumption rates and risk taking behaviors have been highly researched, the quantity-frequency rates of the combined use of alcohol and energy drinks, athlete risk taking behaviors, and negative consequences while combining have not been previously researched. Therefore, the 3 main objectives of the current study were to measure athlete combined use consumption rates, risk taking behaviors, and negative consequences. The usage rates of alcohol, combined use, and energy drinks were measured using the Quick Drink Screen (QDS). Athlete's expectancies of alcohol and combined use were measured using modified versions of the Brief Comprehensive Effects of Alcohol (B-CEOA).

A total of 401 student athletes from a large Division I university participated in the study. From the total QDS sample of 401 athletes, 315 or 78.55% used alcohol, 150 or 37.41% combined, and 194 or 48.62% used energy drinks within the past year. Results indicated that combined users consumed significantly more alcohol than athletes that used alcohol only. However, combined users consumed nearly double the amount of alcohol when they did not combine energy drinks with alcohol. Yet, results of the expectancy measures still indicated that when athletes combined they took significantly more risks and experienced significantly more negative consequences. Results also indicated that men took significantly more risks than women while drinking alcohol only and combining.