Review questions energy drink manufacturers role in research

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Noting that epidemiological studies show that drinkers who consume energy drinks are more likely to record a higher breath alcohol concentration and report drinking more alcohol and engaging in aggressive acts, Peter Miller, Ph.D., from Deakin University in Geelong, Australia, discusses the role of energy drinks in facilitating intoxication and concerns relating to the impartiality of the evidence.

According to the author, several studies have drawn reassuring conclusions regarding combining alcohol and energy drinks. However,

Red Bull, a major producer of energy drinks, often funds this research. Research is frequently presented at conferences, which have limited disclosure requirements. At a recent conference, four out of five researchers were sponsored by industry, and they concluded that there was no evidence to show that the combination of alcohol and energy drinks presents harm, despite the substantial limitations of their research. The non-industry funded researcher reached the same conclusion, but highlighted the lack of evidence to fully address key questions. Other concerns about the role of Red Bull include their limitation of support of researchers with favorable conclusions and provision of placebos only to those with approved protocols.

"It is critical that the public can be confident in the findings of research on these products," the author concludes.

More information: Full Text

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