

Should caffeine be a regulated substance?

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Caffeine-related toxicity, deaths, and near-deaths are an undeniable fact. In Sweden, for example, four people died as a result of confirmed caffeine-related causes in one year. Yet caffeine use continues to grow, including among young people, as it is increasingly added to a variety of drinks, foods, and weight-loss and other commonly used products.

The debate over calls to regulate caffeine rises to a new level of intensity with each untimely death and is captured in the provocative Editorial "Death by Caffeine: How Many Caffeine-related Fatalities and Near-misses Must There Be before We Regulate?" published in *Journal of Caffeine Research*.

In his editorial, Jack E. James, PhD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Caffeine Research* and Professor, Reykjavik University, Iceland and National University of Ireland, Galway, explores the "lethality of caffeine" and the proliferation of "the caffeinated environment," emphasizing in particular the risk posed by caffeine being added to [energy drinks](#), bottled water, [alcoholic drinks](#), candy, [chewing gum](#), and yogurt, for example, and used in pain and cold/flu medications and powder and aerosol inhalers.

Dr. James draws attention to the "rising tide of concern expressed in the public media and scientific literature alike regarding the potential for [caffeine](#)-related harm." He notes that while some countries in Europe and Scandinavia have begun to take regulatory action, including sales restrictions and product labeling, the current "regulatory vacuum" in the United States "seems far from acceptable or prudent." A conversation is

urgently needed to reach a consensus on a practical and effective framework for regulatory action.

More information: Death By Caffeine: How Many Caffeine-Related Fatalities and Near-Misses Must There Be Before We Regulate? Jack E. James. Journal of Caffeine Research. December 2012, 2(4): 149-152. [doi:10.1089/jcr.2013.1226](https://doi.org/10.1089/jcr.2013.1226). Published in Volume: 2 Issue 4: February 19, 2013

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