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Caffeine intake and mental health in college students

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Caffeine intake is a common source of energy, primarily because it is so readily available. It comes in many forms, such as coffee, energy drinks, soda and pills. Many benefits have been attributed to moderate caffeine intake, such as an increase in alertness, attention, cognitive function, mood elevation, less depressive symptoms, fewer cognitive failures and lower risk of suicide. This perhaps explains why caffeine use has become so widespread in college campuses. However, in most cases, the college lifestyle does not centre on moderate caffeine intake; in fact, extremely high doses of caffeine are sometimes consumed by students, an average of over 800 mg/day (almost twice the amount of caffeine intake that has been determined to be safe). The effects that caffeine has on the human body, both short and long term, have been studied in great depth. This study (results pending), aims to investigate whether there is a correlation between caffeine intake, and possible anxiety and depression, in college students undiagnosed with either mental illness. It takes into account different sources of caffeine, the amount consumed per day/week, and the severity of anxiety and depressive symptoms based on generalized anxiety disorder-7 (GAD-7) and patient health questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) scores. An online survey using Qualtrics.com is being conducted and distributed to students at the Florida State University via Facebook™, email, and Twitter™. Statistical analysis on the data will be done to see if there is a significant correlation between caffeine intake and symptoms of anxiety and depression in undiagnosed college students.

Biography

Yasmine Humeda has completed her third year at Florida State University as an Honours Pre-medical student. She was one of nine students to be accepted into the honours Medical Scholars Program in 2013. She began research with Dr. Yang at the Institute of Molecular Biophysics; her goal was to test how molecules bind with the drug delivery molecule cyclodextrin. Later, Yasmine began research with Dr. Sutin at the College of Medicine. The goal was to observe the relationship between aging and memory. She was accepted to present her research at the Florida Undergraduate Research Conference. She is currently a part of the Clinical Research Internship Scholarship Program in the Mayo Clinic.

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