

## Are consumers of alcohol and caffeinated energy drinks risk takers?

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**Introduction:** Alcohol mixed with energy (AmED) use has been purported to increase risky behaviour and alcohol consumption. Recent within-subject studies have questioned this. The current study sought to replicate and extend these findings by examining within-subject self-reported risk-taking following AmED use (vs alcohol use only), as well as the difference in risk-taking propensity, in a New Zealand sample.

**Method:** Data were collected in 2014 using a modified version of an online survey [1] that included a measure of risk-taking behaviour and risk-taking propensity.

**Results:** Of the respondents (n=330), the majority reported consuming alcohol, and 138 AmEDs in the past 6 months. The odds of engaging in eight of twenty-six risk taking behaviours was significantly lower ( $p < .05$ ) in AmED versus alcohol drinking sessions. There was no difference in the amount of alcohol consumed between alcohol-only (mean $\pm$ sd std drinks = 6.41 $\pm$ 4.99) and AmED sessions (mean $\pm$ sd std drinks = 6.07 $\pm$ 4.12). Maximum intake during a drinking session in the last six months was greater during alcohol-only sessions (mean $\pm$ sd std drinks = 12.3 $\pm$ 6.96) than during AmED sessions (mean $\pm$  std drinks = 8.29 $\pm$ 5.69). There was no significant difference in general risk-taking propensity between those who consumed AmEDs and those that did not.

**Conclusions:** Our findings indicate that AmED use does not appear to be related to increase risk-taking behaviour or alcohol consumption, and may in fact decrease risk-taking behaviour. This decrease in risk-taking could be postulated to be the result of the increased alertness provided by AmED use and this hypothesis should be further explored.

### Reference:

[1] Peacock A, Bruno R, Martin FH. The Subjective Physiological, Psychological, and Behavioural Risk-Taking Consequences of Alcohol and Energy Drink co-ingestion. *Alcohol Clin Exp Res* 2012;36:2008-2015.

### Disclosure of Interest Statement

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