

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



How many energy drinks are young people actually drinking?

A new Psychology research project is investigating the prevalence of energy drink consumption in young people.

The study is seeking participants aged between 12–17 years to answer a short survey online.

Postgraduate student in the UTAS School of Psychology Lisa Dunham is conducting the study. She said there is a surprising lack of research into the energy drink consumption of the 12-17 year old age group, both in Australia and overseas.

“Previous studies have examined university-aged people and older, but not the younger age category,” Ms Dunham said.

Ms Dunham, who has worked as a psychologist in the school system, said anecdotally some teachers believe there is a lot of energy drink consumption among young people, but without research and data there is no evidence of how much students are drinking and under what circumstances.

“Many schools have energy drink policies in place, including bans, and what we find out from this study could be an important factor in informing schools’ policies on these drinks.”

Some of the key points the survey will examine are:

- Where young people get energy drinks
- If they are banned at the respondent’s school
- How many energy drinks they drink per day
- When they are drinking them
- If they are having other forms of caffeine and/or cigarettes
- If they consume energy drinks with alcohol

“The study will also look at why young people are drinking them and what side effects they might experience, particularly problems with sleep and/or concentration,” Ms Dunham said.

While the survey only has a few participants so far, initial results are suggesting energy drink consumption is not as prevalent as thought.

“We are keen to get many more participants in order to find out if this is the case,” Ms Dunham said.

Even young people who *don't* drink energy drinks are being sought for their opinions.

“We would still be interested to know the reasons why young people may not be drinking them,” she said.

Information for participants: The survey takes about 10-15 minutes to complete and participants go into the draw to win one of three \$100 JB Hi Fi vouchers. To complete the survey, visit: <https://surveys.psychol.utas.edu.au/> and click on “Survey on Adolescent Energy Drink Use.”

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