

## Media Release

### Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Energy drinks and alcohol can lead to intense risk-taking - but only for some

University of Tasmania School of Psychology (Faculty of Health) researcher Dr Amy Peacock has presented her latest research on mixing alcohol and energy drinks at the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs in Adelaide.

Dr Peacock's previous research has found that young Australians who mix alcohol and energy drinks experience significant negative physical and psychological effects.

Dr Peacock said that somewhat surprisingly, several studies have shown that people are less likely to take risks when they are having alcohol with energy drinks, versus when they have alcohol alone.

"However, we often think that people who consume alcohol mixed with energy drinks are all the same; to date, there has been no research conducted to find out whether there are different patterns of risk-taking behaviour across the consumer group," Dr Peacock said.

"The aim of this study was to see whether there are subgroups of AmED consumers and test the stereotype that all AmED consumers engage in risky impulsive behaviour after drinking the mixed beverages."

Dr Peacock's study found that AmED consumers vary in regards to their behaviour post-consumption, with a small proportion (about one-tenth) reporting a high incidence of risk-taking behaviour.

"So there is a high likelihood of AmED-related risk-taking behaviour, but only in a minority of consumers."

Dr Peacock found the person who is more likely to engage in a range of risk behaviours after AmED is more likely to be male, more impulsive in general, and report more frequent alcohol use, greater alcohol and ED intake, and greater risk-taking after alcohol.

"The same person is likely to take just as many risks after drinking just alcohol as compared to when they drank energy drinks mixed with alcohol," Dr Peacock said.

These results suggest that these behaviours might be more about the individual than the type of alcoholic beverage they are consuming.

“This suggests that these individuals have a high-profile of risk across a spectrum of outcomes, suggesting that we should consider the characteristics of the individual as well as the effects of mixing,” Dr Peacock said.

“The key message from these findings is that the stereotype of AmED consumers engaging in dangerous behaviours post-consumption does not apply to all; it is the behaviour of the minority in this group which leads to this perception.”

**Information released by:**

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