

ENERGY DRINK LABELING: SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED?

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Abstract

The consummation of energy drinks among young people, particularly young adolescents, over the last ten years is constantly increasing, along with even greater demands of the European market regarding labeling. There are warning signs about the harmful effects of energy drinks, leaving an open question of labeling control, and consequently, average daily intake of specific components such as caffeine which can be harmful especially for vulnerable groups. The aim of this study was to compare labeled and measured caffeine values of energy drinks available on the market in the Osijek-Baranja County, Eastern Croatia.

During February 2018, a cross-sectional study was conducted in order to determine the caffeine content in 48 commercially available energy drinks in the Osijek-Baranja County, Eastern Croatia using the high-performance liquid chromatography with diode array detector method.

The study revealed that from nine brands of energy drinks, seven of them had small deviation of declared caffeine value (5 - 10%), and two of them had deviation bigger than 10%. Concentration of caffeine, higher than labeled, was determined in 18.8% samples (5 - 10% deviation). For 68.8% samples caffeine content was within a 5% deviation value.

Today, consumers increasingly want to be informed about the food they consume. Products intended for special purpose, such as energy drinks, contain substances such as caffeine, whose daily intake should be controlled due to its possible adverse health effects; therefore, the accuracy of labeling such products is extremely relevant.

Key words: Energy drinks, Labeling, Caffeine, Young people, Health.