

Written evidence submitted by Ross Carruthers (END0023)

Some thoughts and concerns regarding the use and abuse of energy drinks by young adults and children

As a teacher of games design at college I have seen the rise of use of energy drinks and gamer sponsorships. Specifically targeted to young gamers from 10 upwards.

I think there was an over focus on under 16. The 17 to 25 age group also needs to be looked at.

Personally I think that rather than an un enforced ban that more needs to be done to raise awareness of how to drink responsibly. Maybe a poster campaign in schools to be safe when drinking energy drinks.

I have personal experience of having to stop one student aged 17 who drank 5 cans daily who started having fits tracked back to anemia probably / allegedly caused by daily consumption of five or more energy drinks. I was responsible for having a word with the shop within college to limit the selling of energy drinks so they had to walk a mile or two to buy them. This for 16 plus age group.

If you take a look on twitch game video channel there is a flood of sponsorship and ads for energy drinks. Take a look at silent sentry channel he glugs them away. He is just one example.

16 to 21 is still a high risk category for abuse.

A few energy drinks may be argued to be acceptable but not five or more a day.

Whilst online I was friends with a young gamer who drank them constantly.

I begged him to look up the effects of energy drinks and talked to the parents who seemed to be oblivious

They are also seen as a performance enhancement. Both in terms of reaction times and in terms of giving a good performance on videos.

I think clear labelling would help and more education for educators and shops within colleges and schools.

Personally I believe one drink a day would probably be fine for anyone who does not have other health issues but people tend to knock them back.

Perhaps a maximum amount of caffeine and taurine?

Schools should teach energy drink awareness. The health risks.

When I was at university people were using and abusing pro plus. I myself drank 5 to 10 cups of strong filter coffee a day for a while.

Any static advertising should have a warning on the advert to drink responsibly and have some url web site for kids, parents and educators to look up the problems of energy drinks on health.

<https://www.nhs.uk/news/food-and-diet/warnings-issued-over-energy-drinks/>

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