

Arguments behind my research on caffeine

1) Caffeine is addictive. This means that the general public should be concerned about the habitual consumption of such a potentially dangerous substance.

Argue that addiction \Rightarrow potential dangerous

2) Concern should not mean the end of caffeine consumption. People need to be aware of the effects of what they are putting in their bodies. Educated decisions regarding caffeine can only be made when we are aware if the negative or the positive effects are more over-powering. This will depend on our personal preferences. The choice to consume or not to consume should therefore come from each individual.

Acknowledge

3) A main contention against my argument is that there is no reason to change our caffeine consumption. Caffeine has some proven positive effects and hasn't even been proven to be an addictive drug yet.

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4) What goes into our bodies affects every aspect of our life. The effects of caffeine go beyond typical "health" concerns. Caffeine can influence our mood, sleep patterns, attention span, reaction to stress, and ability to cope under pressure. Not all effects are felt to the same extent by everyone. It's difficult to predict who will experience more positive effects and who will experience more negative effects. The balance of the different effects even varies within individuals from situation to situation.

What argument does this make?

5) Awareness of the negative effects could help someone who thinks of it as a positive substance deal with negative effects they hadn't realized could be attributed to caffeine. Awareness of its positive effects could help those who only see the negative effects also could then possibly be able to use it effectively occasionally. At the least the balanced knowledge could help prevent unsubstantiated attacks on those who do consume caffeine regularly.

6) The choice of whether to use caffeine should be an individual decision. Otherwise we are just, in effect, accepting the uninformed decisions of previous generations based on contradictory information some of which may be provided by companies with an obvious vested interest in the results.

What's the connection from each point to the next & each to the whole?

To make caffeine consumption subject to well informed individual decisions we need science that a) discloses its sponsors; and b) produces individual- and situation-specific knowledge.

Without both of these differences among accounts of caffeine's effects generate confusion among consumers and this tends to lead them not to change their habits. My investigation focuses, therefore, on a) what currently obstructs full disclosure of sponsors; and b) what steps are being or could be taken to produce individual- and situation-specific knowledge of caffeine's effects.

Title:

Toward well-informed decisions to consume caffeine: The need for disclosure of vested interests and for attention to variability in caffeine's effects.