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Dear Editor,

We have read with great interest the paper “Caffeine and high energy drink use and knowledge by nurses in three countries” by Phillips et al. (2021) and we found it of importance with a view to clinical prevention. This study explored the use and knowledge about caffeine and energy drinks in a nurse population. Author suggested that many nurses are consuming caffeine at work and there is a need for education. It is unclear how caffeine affects nurses’ clinical performance, which raises the issue of patient safety.

With reference to the findings reported in the paper, we would like to make the following contribution to the discussion. In previous manuscripts we have highlighted how the use of energy drinks (EDs) both in high quantities and in association with alcohol can cause the appearance of supraventricular arrhythmias i.e. atrial fibrillation. (Mattioli, Manenti, & Farinetti, 2018; Mattioli, Pennella, et al., 2018) In consideration of the changes in lifestyle habits recorded during quarantine, (Bracale & Vaccaro, 2020; Mattioli et al., 2021), especially in young people, we would like to report the data obtained from a survey conducted by means of a questionnaire administered to students of the nursing and dental hygiene classes. A group of 500 undergraduate students of medical classes undergoing an online questionnaire exploring changes in nutrition, physical activity and hygiene during quarantine enforced by Italian government following COVID 19 outbreak. We specifically asked about consumption of EDs (can/day) before and during quarantine. The 24% of students reported that they increase frequency and quantity of energy drinks consumption. Frequency increased from 1/2 cans/week until 1 can a day. Reasons for increasing energy drinks consumption were “increase attention during exams preparation” and “boring”.

Caffeine is a widely used energetic substance with known effects on sport activities, leading to a high consumption in non-professional athletes and young subjects.

More than 70% of EDs users were 18 to 22 years old and were mostly males (51.8). (Majori et al., 2018) About 51% of ED-user college students consumed ED during their studies, consumed at least one can/month (Malinauskas et al., 2007).

Increased consumption of energy drinks during COVID-19-induced quarantine could be one way to cope with stress. Usually, people eat or drink to cope with stress (Torres & Nowson, 2007). Young people have been severely affected by the stress induced by the pandemic as evidenced by several studies. The lack of social relations, the closure of schools and universities, the reduction of physical activity and distance learning have strongly proved the “millennium” generation leading to unhealthy lifestyle. Educational and preventive action is needed to prevent future noncommunicable diseases promoted by an unhealthy lifestyle.

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