

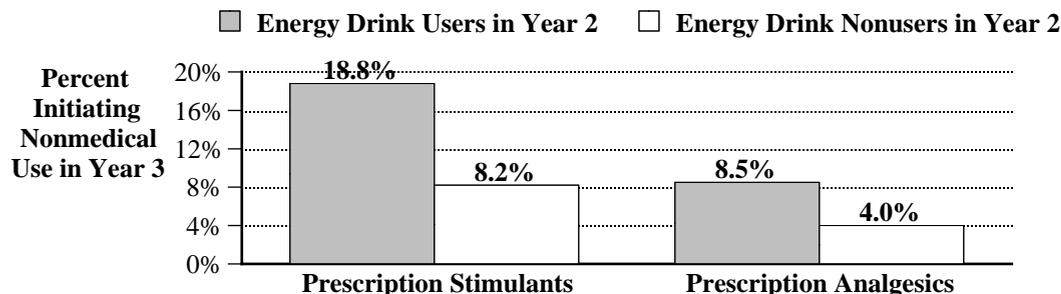
**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

**University of Maryland, College Park**

## *College Students Who Use Energy Drinks More Than Twice as Likely to Initiate Nonmedical Use of Prescription Stimulants and Analgesics in Subsequent Year*

More than one-third (36.5%) of third-year college students reported that they consumed energy drinks in 2006, according to data from the College Life Study, an ongoing longitudinal study of a cohort of college students recruited from one large, public, mid-Atlantic university. Energy drink use was significantly related to higher levels of past and concurrent alcohol and drug use (data not shown). In addition, energy drink users were significantly more likely to subsequently initiate the nonmedical use of prescription stimulants and analgesics. Nearly one-fifth (18.8%) of energy drink users who reported no prescription stimulant use in their second year of college subsequently started using prescription stimulants nonmedically the following year, compared to only 8.2% of energy drink nonusers. Similar results were found for the initiation of the nonmedical use of prescription analgesics (8.5% vs. 4.0%). Additionally, energy drink use predicted subsequent nonmedical use of prescription stimulants and analgesics, even after controlling for demographics, sensation seeking, caffeine consumption, and prior use of the drug of interest. However, no such association was found for subsequent use of other drugs (i.e., tobacco, marijuana, hallucinogens, cocaine, ecstasy, or prescription tranquilizers). According to the authors, “one possible explanation is that energy drinks, like prescription drugs, might be regarded by some students as safer, more normative, or more socially acceptable than using illicit ‘street’ drugs...” (p. 79).

### **Percentage of College Students at a Large, Public Mid-Atlantic University Initiating Nonmedical Prescription Stimulant and Prescription Analgesic Use in Their Third Year of College, by Energy Drink Use in Their Second Year of College, 2005-2006**



NOTE: Nonmedical use was defined as any use of “medications that were not prescribed for you or that you took only for the experience or feeling they caused.”

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Arria, A.M., Caldeira, K.M., Kasperski, S.J., O’Grady, K.E., Vincent, K.B., Griffiths, R.R., and Wish, E.D., “Increased Alcohol Consumption, Nonmedical Prescription Drug Use, and Illicit Drug Use Are Associated with Energy Drink Consumption Among College Students,” *Addiction Medicine* 4(2):74-80, 2010. For more information, contact Dr. Ameila Arria at aarria@umd.edu.

### **Central Washington University Bans Alcohol Energy Drinks from Campus**

The nine Central Washington University students who were hospitalized last month after an off-campus party had been drinking the caffeinated malt liquor “Four Loko”. According to a press release from the University, the blood alcohol levels of hospitalized students ranged from .123 to .35. The University has now banned alcohol energy drinks from their campus. For more information on alcohol-energy drinks and the FDA’s inquiry into the safety of such drinks, see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 18, Issue 46 (<http://www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/cesarfax/vol18/18-46.pdf>).