



## Measuring parental attitudes about energy drinks

Energy drink consumption among young people has become an issue of public health concern and the American Academy of Pediatrics even recommends that children and adolescents never consume caffeinated energy drinks.<sup>1</sup> To better understand attitudes about energy drinks and related labeling and regulation, we surveyed 985 parents of 2- to 18-year-old children and youth to determine parental opinion about appropriateness of these drinks for their own children, feelings regarding caffeine and other common ingredients, as well as general attitudes about health. We looked at differences among age categories.

### Methods

The survey was conducted on the internet from September 14th to September 26th, 2011. We recruited a national sample of parents and augmented the sample to ensure it included at least 150 African American parents and 150 Hispanic parents. Survey Sampling International (SSI) distributed the survey to its panel of consumers who agree to participate in ongoing consumer research. SSI recruits its panel members through thousands of websites to obtain a representative sample of the online population. The company screens panelists to provide highly qualified respondents and to minimize fraud. To ensure more honest responses, panelists do not receive a direct reward for completing individual surveys. Instead, participants receive compensation for being active panelists. These rewards range from charitable donations and information to monetary and point rewards for overall participation. All participants in this survey were anonymous, and the procedures were approved by Yale University's Human Subjects Committee. Participants accessed the survey on the computer through an e-mail link.

### Results

985 parents completed the survey (60% white, 26% black, 16% Hispanic) and respondents were largely supportive of restrictions and regulations of energy drinks. Parents also displayed support for regulations that would limit the marketing of these products to youth.

Parental support for regulations	Percent Agreement*
"I think energy drink labels should report the amount of caffeine in the product."	86
"I think energy drinks should include warning labels about the potential adverse effects of drinking their products."	85
"I do not think energy drinks should be marketed to children or adolescents."	78
"I do not think energy drinks should be sold to children or adolescents."	74
"Youth should be 18 years old to consume energy drinks."	45

\* Response of 7, 8, or 9 on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree)

<sup>1</sup> Sports drinks and energy drinks for children and adolescents: are they appropriate? *Pediatrics* 2011;127(6):1182-9.