

Effects of Low Doses of Caffeine in Coffee on Human Performance and Mood

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SUMMARY

An experimental study of the effects of low doses of caffeine (1.5 mg/kg body weight) on mood and mental performance was carried out. 46 female subjects were assigned to either the caffeine or de-caffeinated condition, the caffeine manipulation being doubleblind. The caffeine was administered in a 150 ml cup of de-caffeinated coffee, given after lunch (or at a similar time when no lunch was consumed). Baseline mood and performance data were recorded prior to the caffeine manipulation and the tests were repeated again in the early afternoon and late afternoon. The results showed that caffeine increased alertness and improved psychomotor speed and the accuracy of verbal reasoning. The effects of caffeine were greater in the early afternoon than late afternoon and these effects were observed on days when lunch was consumed and when the subjects abstained from eating. There was little evidence of the effects of caffeine being different in low and high impulsive subjects.