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GWU Honors Student Presents Research Proposal on Effects of Caffeine on Soccer Midfielders

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Office of University
Communications

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Honors Program Gave Jordan Vitale, '20, Opportunities to Travel and Share Her Ideas

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 85% of the United States adult population consumes at least one caffeinated beverage per day.
- Caffeine is considered to be a popular ergogenic aid for many athletes and has been suggested to increase force production and reduce fatigue.
- There has been mixed results about whether or not caffeine actually improves different types of exercise performance. The studies that do exist focus primarily on males.
- Caffeine has also been shown to have dangerous side effects. In 2011, 1,499 adolescents went to the emergency room for an emergency related to energy drinks.

Caffeine Molecule

CN1C=NC2=C1C(=O)N(C)C(=O)N2C

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caffeine>

A screenshot of Jordan Vitale's Honors Thesis made during the Zoom Teleconference. Photo courtesy of Joy Smith, GWU Student Photographer

Jordan Vitale, '20, an exercise science major with a health sciences concentration at Gardner-Webb University, recently presented a research proposal for her Honors thesis. Because of the Coronavirus pandemic, Vitale and the other students in the Honors Program gave their presentations through a Zoom teleconference.

Vitale, of Tampa, Fla., plans to apply to medical school. The topic of her proposal was “The Effects of Energy Drinks on Division I Soccer Midfielders.”

Q: Why did you choose your research proposal topic?

Vitale: I chose my research topic, because I had a soccer teammate who always swore by drinking an energy drink prior to every game. She thought it would enhance her exercise performance and make her play better. I was interested to see if caffeine/energy drinks actually enhanced exercise performance, so I decided to research it. In reviewing the literature, I found there was a huge gap in the research, and it’s not known what caffeine does to the body let alone with exercise and specifically in females. It’s essential to continue research on the effects of caffeine on various athletes during exercise in order to prevent dangerous side effects, such as dehydration, heart complications, anxiety and insomnia.



Q: What valuable lessons did you learn from doing your research?

Vitale: I feel as if I learned a lot through my research. I read dozens of articles about various studies involving caffeine. I learned that choosing the best information to include is essential. I had at least 30 articles to sort through and pick out what information was the most important.

Q: How has the Honors Program enhanced your GWU experience?

Vitale: I was able to meet a ton of different people outside of my team, who I spend most of my time with. The Honors Program also allowed me to go on some neat trips and present some of my work. I was able to go to Washington, D.C., and Memphis, Tenn., with some great people.

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