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Scientific News

Beyond Caffeine: Nestlé Researchers Explore the Cognitive and Mood Benefits of Decaffeinated Coffee

Lausanne, SWITZERLAND 26 July 2011 – Coffee is one of the most widely consumed beverages in the world. Coffee contains numerous compounds with purported antioxidant properties including ferulic acid, caffeic acid and chlorogenic acids (CGA). While the stimulatory effects of caffeine on behaviour are quite well established, little is known about the cognitive effects of other bioactives in coffee. Scientists at the Nestlé Research Center in Lausanne, Switzerland, evaluated the potential effects of these other compounds on brain function. The full article is available in Psychopharmacology.

As CGA is the most abundant family of compounds found in coffee, Nestlé Researchers conducted a pilot study to compare the acute effects of decaffeinated coffees with different levels of CGA on mood and cognitive performance in older adults. Two soluble decaffeinated coffee solutions – one with normal CGA amounts and the other with high CGA – were tested against both a soluble caffeinated coffee with a regular level of CGA and a coffee placebo. Following consumption of the respective coffee drinks, participants were given a variety of tasks to measure mood and cognitive function.

As expected, the regular caffeinated coffee enhanced mood and attention compared to the placebo and regular decaffeinated coffee. Interestingly though, the decaffeinated coffee with high CGA content increased alertness, reduced feelings of mental fatigue, and decreased the number of reported headaches amongst the study participants, relative to the placebo and regular decaffeinated coffee.

“This pilot study yields notable results that we will continue to build on,” said Dr. Beata Silber, Nestlé Research scientist. “The implications of these results could have significant consequences not only for coffee but also for other food products. Nestlé is conducting further research into the potential effects of coffee compounds on cognition and mood.”

These results provide the first indication that there are compounds in coffee, other than caffeine, that can improve mood and mood-related behavioral effects. However, due to the exploratory nature of this study, further investigation is required to confirm these findings.

Article Reference:
Cropley VL, Croft RJ, Silber BY, Neale C, Scholey A, Stough C, Schmitt JAJ. Does coffee enriched with chlorogenic acids improve mood and cognition after acute administration in healthy elderly? A pilot study. *Psychopharmacology*

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Nestlé Science & Research, encompassing the Nestlé Research Center and its extensive network of external alliances, is a leading research entity in food, nutrition and life sciences. Based on Nestlé's research emphasis, Nestlé Science & Research builds strategic alliances with the best scientific institutions in the world to bring a full breadth of knowledge to its nutrition, health and wellness research. A diverse staff of premier researchers from a broad range of scientific competencies together with external collaborators worldwide are central to fulfilling Nestlé's vision of *Good Food, Good Life*.

Nestlé Research is very active in consumer health benefit areas, employing a multidisciplinary approach to science and research. Integrating diverse scientific disciplines and expertise ranging from biology, food technology, nutrigenomics and sociology, Nestlé strives to bring practical nutrition solutions to consumers. Learn more about the Nestlé Research Center at www.research.nestle.com.

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