Information Folder

Sensory Panel

(PAC Study)

Subject information for participation
in scientific research

Sensory Panel

To describe the sensory attributes of the energy drinks and caffeinated chewing gums.

Introduction

Dear Sir/Madam,

You are kindly requested to take part in a scientific study. Your participation is voluntary, and if you choose to participate, we will ask for your written consent. Before making a decision, you will be given an explanation about what the study and your participation involves. Please take your time to read this information carefully. Should you have any questions or need further clarification, don not hesitate to ask our investigator. If desired, you can also discuss this with your partner, friends, or family.

This study is carried out by the Division of Human Nutrition and Health at Wageningen University. The WUR Research Ethics Committee for non-medical studies involving human subjects (WUR-REC) has granted approval for this study.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

Our sensory panel study is designed to evaluate a range of energy drinks and caffeinated chewing gums. The primary goal is to understand the sensory attributes of these products — such as taste, aroma, texture, and aftertaste.

2. What does my participation involve?

Your involvement in this study can be summarized in a few key phases:

Screening and Information Session (15-20 minutes):

- If you choose to join, we will first send you a link including a brief questionnaire which gathers data about your health, and demographic information. We will determine your eligibility to participate after this meeting. In some cases, we invite participants to Helix to test their sense of taste and smell ability before deciding if they are eligible.
- When you are eligible and interested to participate in this study, we will invite you to an online / onsite information session where we explain the study to you in detail, during this meeting you will have a chance to ask any questions you might have.
- If you are eligible, we ask you to sign the informed consent form. If you need more time to decide, you can schedule another meeting with the researcher.

Training sessions

You will participate training sessions together with other panel members to familiarize yourself with the predefined attribute list and the use of descriptive sensory analysis techniques, to calibrate your sensory evaluation skills.
Duration: 4.5 – 6 hours in total over 3-4 sessions.

Test sessions

You will evaluate a few energy drinks and caffeinated chewing gums while applying the skills learned in training sessions. Each session will include a subset of products to avoid sensory fatigue.
Duration: 1-2 sessions in total (max of 1 hour per session).

Summary:

- The study consists of one informational meeting (around 20 minutes), 3-4 training sessions (around 1.5 hour per session) and 2-3 test sessions (max of 1 hour per session).
- Overall, your commitment will amount to 6-8 hours.
- You will evaluate products already available in the Netherlands.
- We have structured the sessions to ensure your caffeine consumption stays within safe limits (400mg).

3. What are the reasons for not being able to participate?

To be eligible for this study, you must:

- Be between the ages of 18 and 55 on the day of inclusion
- Be able to understand and communicate in English (self-report)
- Be in good general health (self-report)
- Be a non-smoker
- Not pregnant or nursing

You cannot participate in the study if you:

- Have difficulties with swallowing, chewing and or eating in general
- Report taste or smell disorders
- Are an employee of the Division of Human Nutrition and Health, WUR
- Suffer from caffeine hypersensitivity, an endocrine or eating disorder, gastrointestinal illness or illness of the thyroid gland, respiratory disease, kidney disease, hearth disease, high blood pressure or diabetes (Type I or Type II)
- Have any dietary restrictions, allergies or intolerance
- Consumed recreational drugs within 48 hours prior to/during testing
- Take medication that could potentially influence the study outcomes (self-report)
- Are diagnosed with mental health issues

Your commitments:

In order to perform the study it is important that you agree to do the following points:

- Abstain from other caffeinated products on the session days

- Abstain from intensive exercise or alcohol consumption 24 hours before each test session
- Avoid drug use for the duration of the study (starting after the screening).
- Avoid consuming strong-flavoured foods or drinks 1 hour prior to the sessions
- Do not participate in any other sensory-scientific research
- Attend all scheduled sessions or notify us in advance if you cannot (preferably one week prior)

Important Notes:

Please contact the lead researchers if:

- You feel ill or have a cold prior to a screening or test session.
- You decide to withdraw from the study.
- Your contact details change (email, phone number).

4. Are there any benefits or risks for participating?

While there are no direct personal benefits from participating in this study, your involvement will contribute significantly to enhancing public health knowledge.

In return for your time and effort, you will receive (€40 + travel costs).

We do not anticipate any discomfort or side effects from the products you will consume during the study, as they are all commercially available. To overcome any possible undesirable discomforts, the quantity of products you will be sampling each day has been determined with the recommended safe daily caffeine intake (400mg) in mind.

5. What if I no longer want to participate?

Your decision to participate in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the freedom to choose whether or not you would like to be a part of the study. If you choose to join, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time without facing any consequences. While you are not obligated to provide a reason for your withdrawal, we kindly request that you inform the lead researcher promptly. Upon notification, any data pertaining to you will be destroyed. If there are any updates or new information about the study

that might be relevant to you, the investigator will let you know. You will then be asked to reaffirm your decision to continue participating.

6. When will the study be ended?

Your involvement in the study concludes under the following circumstances:

- You have attended all the sessions as outlined in section 2.
- You decide to withdraw from the study.
- The study is ceased by either Wageningen University or government authorities.

The overall study will be considered complete once all panel members has finished their test sessions. Once the data has been analysed, the investigator will share the key findings of the study with you. You can expect this information approximately a year after your participation has ended.

7. How will my personal data be handled?

For this study it is necessary to collect personal data (for example your names, contact details), but all your data will be held securely and strictly confidential. The electronic form of the data will be stored on a password-protected digital database on an intern network. The password is only known by the investigators.

You will receive a unique code (ID) that will be marked on all questionnaires and research documents. This ensures that your personal identification remains confidential. The code-to-identity link will be stored separately and will only be accessible to the research coordinator and project leaders. The (other) researchers who will work with the data will not be able to link the research data to your personal data.

All personal data will be kept for 10 years after the end of the study. After this period, the links (codes) connecting your identity to the research data will be permanently destroyed. Consequently, it will be impossible to trace any of the research data back to you. No personal identifiers will be included in any publications stemming from this study.

We plan to make the other research data available for potential reuse in future research, other research areas and/or by other scientists. When we share the data for this purpose, we will do this in a way that no information can be traced back to you.

By signing the provided consent form, you grant permission for the collection, storage, and access of your personal data in line with the procedures outlined above.

10. Compensation for participation

When you finish the entire study, you will receive €40 including travel cost. Please note that if you choose to stop before the study is over, we can only cover your travel cost.

11. Any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact the study team (pac.study@wur.nl) or principal investigator Dr. Beyza Ustun Elayan (beyza.ustun@wur.nl). Any ethical concerns about the study may also be directed to Jacoline van der Zijden / to Professor Moore, Chair of the WUR Research Ethics Committee at rec@wur.nl.

PAC Study Team

- Dr. Beyza Ustun-Elayan
- Vyshnavi Praveen
- Assist. Prof. Dr. Marlou Lasschuijt
- Prof. Dr. Ciarán Forde

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12. Signing the consent form

When you have had sufficient time for reflection, you will be asked to decide on participation in this study. If you give permission, we will ask you to confirm this in writing on the appended consent form. By your written permission you indicate that you have understood the details of the study and are willing to participate voluntarily. The signed form will be kept by the

study investigator. For your records, you will get a copy of this consent form. Thank you for your attention.

13. Appendices to this information

A. Informed consent form

- I have read the subject information folder. I was also able to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I had enough time to decide whether to participate.
- I know that participation is voluntary. I know that I may decide at any time not to participate after all or to withdraw from the study. I do not need to give a reason for this.
- I know that some people can access my data. These people are listed in this the information folder.
- I consent to my data being used in the way and for the purpose stated in the information sheet
- I consent to my personal data being stored for another 10 years after this study.
- I want to participate in this study.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Name of participant:
Signature: Date: __ / __ / __

I hereby declare that I have adequately informed this study subject about this study.
If information comes to light during the course of the study that could affect the study subject's consent, I will inform him/her of this in a timely fashion.

Name of investigator (or his/her representative):
Signature: Date:__ / __ / __
