Reviewer's report

Title: Australian children's consumption of caffeinated, formulated beverages: a cross-sectional analysis

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Reviewer: Amy Branum

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1. Although the Authors have provided better clarity regarding results, it seems as if estimation of mean caffeine intake in Tables 3 and 4 could be useful in addition to the estimation of grams of CSB consumed. Since the focus of the manuscript is on beverages with added caffeine, and not all soft drinks or sugar-sweetened beverages, it seems as if this would be a natural part of the results. Is there a compelling reason for not including these estimations?

2. In addition, there is still some confusion on presenting results for all children versus just caffeine reporters versus CSB consumers. In the Results section the percentages of all caffeine consumers and all CSB consumers are described but Table 2 is among all children, not just caffeine consumers, and Table 3 is just among CSB consumers. It is hard to know what the most important comparisons are but it seems as if it should be between caffeine consumers and CSB consumers since non-CSB consumers also include the 22% of children who did not consume caffeine at all.

3. Methods, Beverage Classification section, p. 8, lines 166-167: The Authors mention here that caffeine consumption from CFBs were deducted from total caffeine from food sources but how were coffee and tea treated since they were excluded from the CFB designation?

4. Results section: p. 10, lines 201-203: The change to the sentence regarding the percentage of participants consuming CFB (15%) versus any caffeine (78%) is helpful but it still seems like a big discrepancy given that such a large proportion of caffeine among youth typically comes from soft drinks. It is possible that this relatively low percentage is a result of how you classified CSBs but it still seems low.

5. Discussion section: p. 13, lines 284-286: It is unclear how the results of the paper add to the evidence that removing or restricting caffeine could result in decreased consumption of SSB, especially since SSBs were not directly assessed as part of the analysis. It is recommended that this sentence be deleted.

6. Discussion section p. 14, lines 291-293: Here the Authors state that total caffeine intakes were below recommended intake levels but they did not assess this among children who reported greater CSB consumption just overall CSB consumers and non-consumers. It seems plausible that caffeine intakes could be greater than recommended among the heavier consumers of CSBs. Also,
because the amount of intake is downplayed here it asks the question of why intake of these beverages is problematic. In the section on intervention it is recommended that children’s consumption of CSB should be lowered, but why if overall intake is low and are only consumed by a relatively small percentage of children overall? The Authors have not made a compelling case why CSB consumption is this population may be problematic.

7. Figure 2: I maintain that this Figure is not particularly insightful since the overwhelming majority of CSBs are classified as non-energy drinks. Given the number of tables and figures in this paper I would suggest just mentioning in the text that energy drinks accounted for less than 5 percent of intake and varied little by age.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.