

# Caffeine Consumption and Depression Among UCSD Undergraduate Students



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## Background

- Caffeine is the most commonly used psychostimulant → psychological effects, including addiction and dependence
- College students facing stress due to busy schedules → consume caffeine to cope with mental fatigue
- Most college students consume ~400-500 mg/day of caffeine, compared to the recommended amount to boost cognitive performance ~32-300 mg/day



## Objective

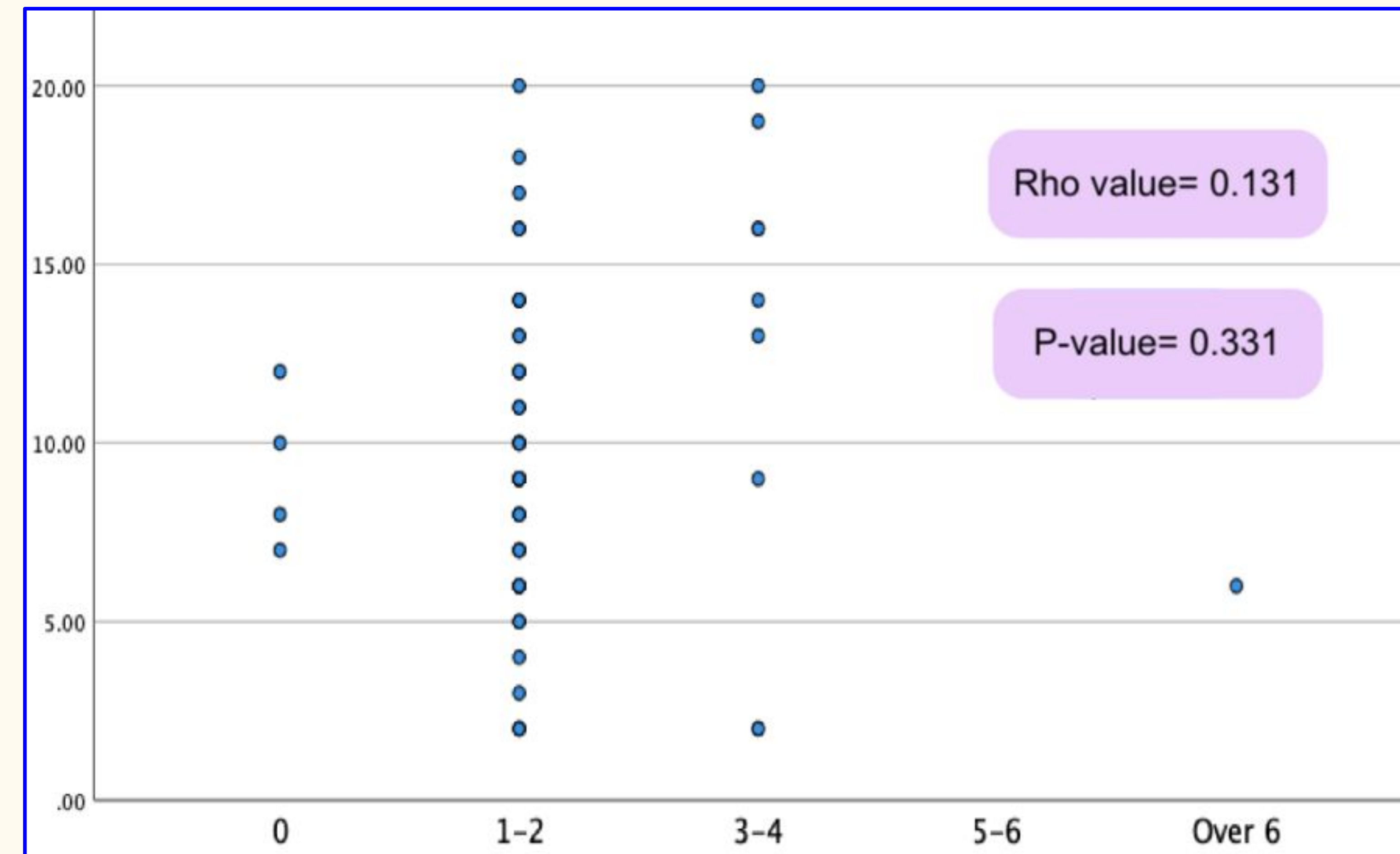
- To investigate the relationship between caffeine consumption and depressive symptoms among UCSD undergraduate students ages 18-25

## Methods

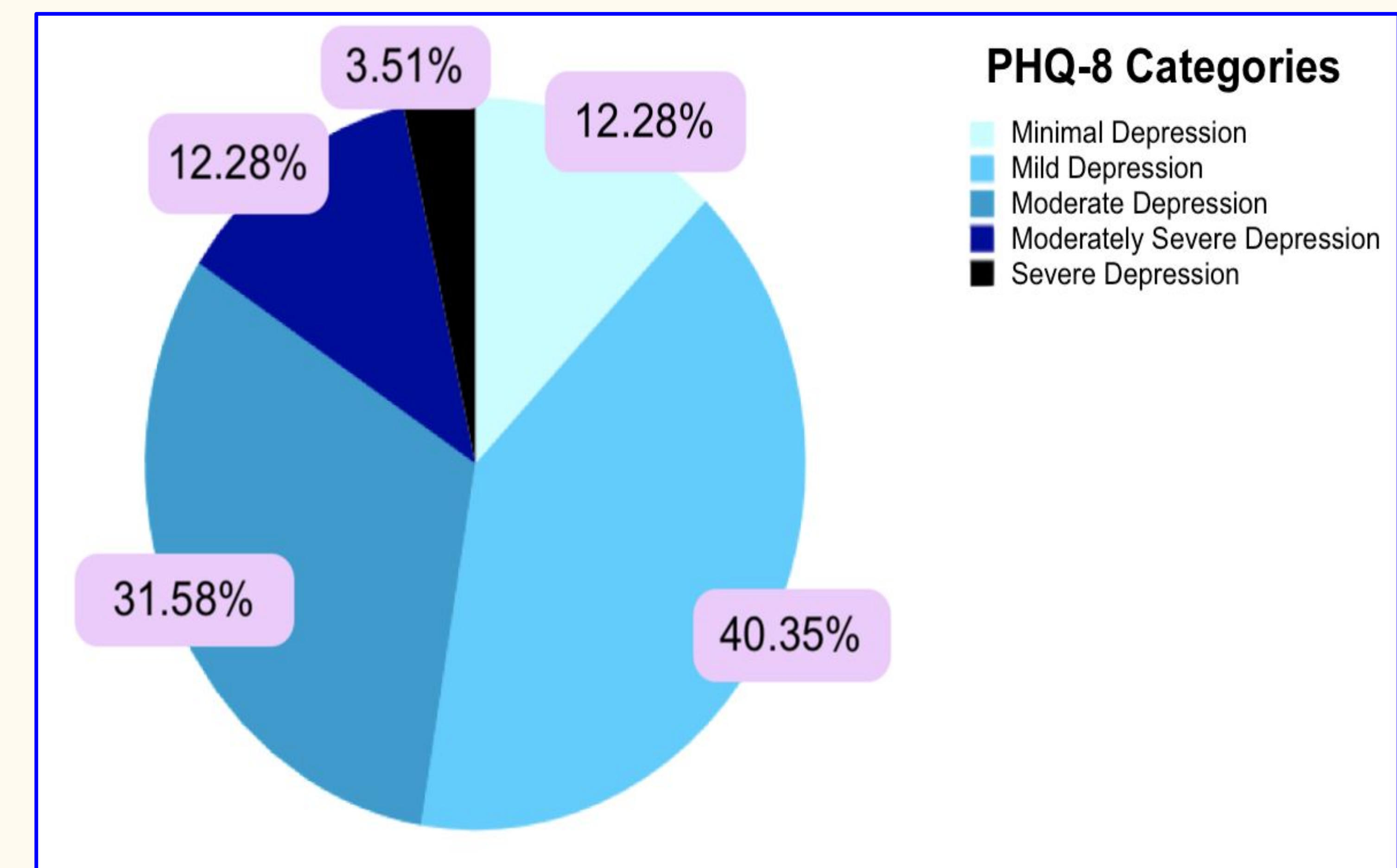
- Our cross-sectional study distributed an anonymous survey online via Google Forms
  - **Recruitment:** on-campus flyering, UCSD Reddit forum, and email sent by HWSPH
- Questions regarding caffeine consumption
  - Asked participants about the typical amount of caffeinated drinks consumed daily and type of drink most consumed
- Questions regarding symptoms of depression
  - Used the PHQ-8 to measure severity of depression
- SPSS: used Spearman correlation coefficient to measure strength of relationship between exposure and outcome

## Results

Caffeinated Drinks Consumed Daily vs Depression Score



Depression Scores



- Our study consisted of 57 participants
  - 66.7% identified as female, 29.8% as male, and 3.5% as non-binary
- Average age of participants was 20.11 (SD= 1.55)
- Most popular caffeinated drink consumed was coffee (52.6%)

- 75.4% reported consuming 1-2 caffeinated drinks daily
- Average PHQ-8 score was 9.81 (SD= 4.73) → mild severity of depression
- Spearman correlation value 0.131 → slight positive correlation, but our p-value of 0.331 → correlation value is not statistically significant

## Conclusion



- Higher amounts of daily caffeine consumption is not associated with an increase in depressive symptoms among undergraduate students at UCSD

## Implications

- Improving campus resources such as activities to cope with stress and mental health services must be prioritized to address caffeine addiction & improve students' well-being
- College campuses should offer education programs on potential caffeine impacts on mental health

## Abstract

