More California Dreamin': Proposition 65 and Caffeine

By ACSH Staff — December 11, 2007

California may once again target innocuous beverages -- caffeine-containing sodas and energy drinks -- for labeling with the dreaded Proposition 65 warning label [1]. According to an Associated Press article [2], a California advisory board is calling for a study to determine if such beverages pose a risk to pregnant women.

While very high levels of caffeine intake might indeed be problematic for some pregnant women, the current concern is based mostly on high-dose animal studies, which are certainly not directly applicable to humans [3]. Further, the proposed study wouldn't even include the sources of most beverage caffeine -- coffee and tea!

Several professional organizations -- such as the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology -- have approved moderate caffeine intake during pregnancy. Slapping a Proposition 65 warning label on cans of soda would do nothing to improve pregnancy outcomes -- it would simply confuse consumers. This is just another example of a feel-good law that allows people to think -- without a shred of evidence -- that they're improving public health.

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See: ACSH's report California's Proposition 65 and Its Impact on Public Health [1].