

Wederhoor Joris Verster

Vragen Investico 1 juli

Beste heer Joris Verster,

Op 21 mei benaderden we u met een gespreksverzoek over (de kritiek op) uw onderzoek naar energiedrankjes. Omwille van gezondheidsredenen gaf u toen aan daar niet op in te kunnen gaan. Nu vragen we u graag opnieuw om met ons in gesprek te gaan, aangezien er een aantal ontwikkelingen in ons onderzoek zijn die we u graag willen voorleggen.

De Universiteit Utrecht geeft aan u in 2014 te hebben opgelegd om geen onderzoeken meer te 'werven' op gebied van alcohol en daaraan gerelateerde onderwerpen als anti-katerbehandelingen en de effecten van cafeïne-houdende dranken. In de jaren nadien heeft u nog verschillende onderzoeken gepubliceerd over anti-katerbehandelingen en cafeïne-houdende dranken, het betreft onder meer door Red Bull en Sen-Jam Pharmaceutical gesponsorde studies. De universiteit stelt ook dat verschillende van uw onderzoeken voor Red Bull en Sen-Jam Pharmaceutical onder uw nevenwerkzaamheden vallen, maar de conflict of interest onvoldoende transparant is gemeld. Zo staat op al deze publicaties bij uw naam de UU als affiliatie vermeld. We vonden 18 studies van u over energiedrankjes die sponsoring van Red Bull vermelden, volgens de universiteit zijn 16 daarvan onderdeel van uw nevenwerkzaamheden, terwijl dit niet zo staat aangegeven en bovenaan het paper Universiteit Utrecht als affiliatie staat. Bij deze publicaties heeft u volgens de universiteit geen toestemming gevraagd om deze onderzoeken te doen, terwijl dat volgens de UU wel verplicht is. Ook zegt de UU dat ze meer had moeten doorvragen naar de aard van uw nevenwerkzaamheden, en mogelijk had moeten besluiten daar geen toestemming voor te geven.

We zijn benieuwd hoe u naar deze gang van zaken kijkt. We zullen binnenkort over dit onderzoek publiceren in De Groene Amsterdammer en in dagblad Trouw en zouden uw kant van dit verhaal graag horen, zodat we die zo goed mogelijk kunnen meenemen in onze publicaties.

Ik hoor graag.

Met vriendelijke groet,

8 juli antwoord Verster

Beste heer NAAM,

Dank voor uw e-mail van 1 juli jl.

Vanwege mijn gezondheid ben ik op dit moment niet beschikbaar voor een interview. Omdat uw voorgenomen publicaties mijn wetenschappelijke en

professionele reputatie kunnen raken, wil ik wel graag schriftelijk reageren op een aantal feitelijke punten die u in uw e-mail aan mij voorlegt. Ik verzoek u deze reactie zorgvuldig bij uw publicaties te betrekken.

U schrijft dat de Universiteit Utrecht aangeeft dat mij in 2014 zou zijn opgelegd om geen onderzoeken meer te werven op het gebied van alcohol en daaraan gerelateerde onderwerpen, zoals anti-katerbehandelingen en de effecten van cafeïnehoudende dranken. Voor zover mij bekend is dat onjuist. Ik heb in 2014 geen dergelijke maatregel of instructie ontvangen. Ook is aan mij geen publicatieverbod opgelegd en is mij, voor zover ik weet, nooit verboden om onderzoek te verrichten naar deze onderwerpen.

De gang van zaken na 2014 past naar mijn mening ook niet bij het bestaan van een dergelijk verbod. Na 2014 ben ik namelijk als co-promotor betrokken geweest bij meerdere promotietrajecten op het gebied van alcohol, katers en energiedrankjes/cafeïnehoudende dranken. Het gaat onder meer om de volgende trajecten:

Van 2014 tot 2022 was ik co-promotor bij een promotietraject aan de University of the West of England, Bristol, op het gebied van energiedrankjes.

Van 2016 tot 2020 was ik co-promotor bij een promotietraject aan de University of Bath op het gebied van alcoholkaters.

Daarnaast ben ik binnen de Universiteit Utrecht betrokken geweest bij promotie- en onderzoekstrajecten op het gebied van alcoholkaters, alcoholgebruik en aanverwante onderwerpen. Voor zover mij bekend waren deze werkzaamheden binnen de Universiteit Utrecht bekend en zijn deze ook in mijn B&O-verslagen vermeld. De betreffende alcoholgerelateerde promotietrajecten binnen de Universiteit Utrecht zijn destijds bovendien formeel goedgekeurd via het MyPhD-systeem van de Universiteit Utrecht. Ik heb destijds niet begrepen dat deze werkzaamheden in strijd zouden zijn met een instructie of verbod uit 2014.

Voor zover u doelt op de promotietrajecten aan Engelse universiteiten, merk ik op dat die onderzoeken daar plaatsvonden en dat de Universiteit Utrecht daarin, voor zover mij bekend, geen inhoudelijke of financiële rol had. Mijn betrokkenheid bestond uit mijn rol als co-promotor. Ik heb deze werkzaamheden steeds beschouwd als reguliere academische werkzaamheden die samenhangen met mijn wetenschappelijke expertise.

U schrijft daarnaast dat de Universiteit Utrecht verschillende onderzoeken kwalificeert als nevenwerkzaamheden, dat de conflict of interest daarbij onvoldoende transparant zou zijn gemeld en dat bij publicaties de Universiteit

Utrecht als affiliatie staat vermeld. Zonder een concrete specificatie per publicatie kan ik daar niet goed inhoudelijk op reageren. Als u deze punten in uw publicaties wilt betrekken, verzoek ik u daarom om concreet aan te geven om welke publicaties het gaat en waarop de conclusie is gebaseerd dat voor die publicaties toestemming vereist was of dat de vermelding van mijn affiliatie onjuist was.

Voor zover op publicaties mijn affiliatie bij de Universiteit Utrecht is vermeld, hield dat verband met mijn academische aanstelling bij de Universiteit Utrecht. Dat betekent niet zonder meer dat de Universiteit Utrecht het betreffende onderzoek inhoudelijk heeft aangestuurd of gefinancierd.

Ik verzoek u dan ook om in uw publicaties in ieder geval duidelijk te vermelden dat ik betwist dat mij in 2014 een verbod of instructie is opgelegd om geen onderzoek meer te werven of te verrichten op het gebied van alcohol, anti-katerbehandelingen of cafeïnehoudende dranken. Ook verzoek ik u om duidelijk te vermelden dat mijn betrokkenheid bij verschillende promotie- en onderzoekstrajecten na 2014 binnen de Universiteit Utrecht bekend was, dat alcoholgerelateerde promotietrajecten binnen de Universiteit Utrecht destijds formeel via het MyPhD-systeem zijn goedgekeurd en dat ik deze werkzaamheden steeds als reguliere academische werkzaamheden heb beschouwd.

Als u beschikt over concrete documenten waaruit volgens u volgt dat mij in 2014 wel een dergelijke instructie of maatregel is opgelegd, dan ontvang ik die graag, zodat ik daarop gericht kan reageren voordat uw publicaties verschijnen.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Joris Verster

Vragen Investico en The Examination 9 juli

Dear Dr. Verster:

We are reporters with Investico and The Examination, a nonprofit newsroom in the United States that covers global public health.

We are writing in connection to stories that we are reporting in partnership with Paper Trail Media (Germany), Der Spiegel (Germany), Der Standard (Austria) and The Bristol Cable (United Kingdom). Our stories examine the safety of energy drinks, particularly for young people, and research on alcohol and energy drinks that you

and other researchers affiliated with Red Bull have conducted. Please consider this a request for comment on behalf of all of these news outlets.

While we have diligently reported this story, we are not done. We received your message on July 8 and we appreciate your time and insights in our conversation earlier this year. We understand that you have declined a followup interview by phone or in person, but we are eager to hear your perspective on our remaining questions, in particular your response to our findings to date. We especially seek any clarifications, corrections or additional context to our findings that you believe are needed.

Please respond to schedule an interview by July 15, or with written answers to our questions by that date.

Our findings so far:

- AMED studies and Boston University contract

- At least 18 studies that addressed the risks of mixing alcohol with energy drinks received funding from Red Bull or had authors who reported financial ties to Red Bull, according to study disclosures. You were a co-author of 16 of those studies. Nearly all of the studies on AMED that report funding or other financial ties to Red Bull found that mixing alcohol and energy drinks does not increase health and safety risks, according to an analysis underway by The Examination. By comparison, most independent research and health authorities such as the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#) have found that AMED is associated with harmful outcomes such as binge drinking, injuries and unwanted or unprotected sex.

- Around 2011, a team at Boston University led by Jonathan Howland entered into a contract with Red Bull to conduct research on AMED. The research was carried out in partnership with you and Lydia de Haan and intended to replicate a study that found that mixing alcohol with energy drinks resulted in less drinking and fewer negative consequences than drinking alcohol alone ([De Haan et al. 2012](#)). Roughly a year into the contract, the Boston University team identified what they considered to be fundamental flaws in your team's methodology, according to interviews with Howland and another member of the Boston University research team.

- A key concern identified by the Boston University team, according to Howland and his colleague, was that your methodology used different time periods for measuring the number of alcoholic beverages consumed and negative consequences such as drunk driving and taking foolish risks for AMED as compared to alcohol alone. For AMED, the survey asked about alcoholic beverages and negative consequences if they occurred within two hours of consuming an energy drink. For alcohol alone, the

survey asked about alcoholic beverages and negative consequences over the course of an entire drinking session, no matter how long it lasted. Five alcohol research experts consulted by The Examination described this methodology as flawed because the difference in time periods could produce a misleading result that undercounted the amount of alcohol consumed and the harm that occurred during an AMED session. Several of the experts described this methodology as biased and unethical. The half-life of caffeine is about five hours, according to the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

- Howland and his colleague said they urged your team to change its methodology to avoid producing biased research. But you and Red Bull refused to allow any changes, telling the Boston University team that their role was technical assistance and did not include shaping the study. In June 2012, Howland and his team withdrew from the study, citing biased methodology and concerns about their professional reputations. Emails, methodology descriptions in published studies, and other documents reviewed by The Examination support the account provided by Howland and his colleague.

- Despite having been made aware of these concerns, you continued using the same time limits for defining AMED in contrast to alcohol alone. You and other researchers supported by Red Bull went on to publish at least six more studies using the same time limits that prompted Boston University to withdraw from its contract. In addition to yourself, co-authors of these studies included Sean Johnson and Chris Alford of the University of the West of England and Andrew Scholey and Sarah Benson of Swinburne University in Australia. In our interview with you in March 2026, you referred to the findings of these studies and stated that they demonstrated that your 2012 research was indeed sound.

- Researchers consulted by The Examination have criticized the influence of your work on the body of research into alcohol mixed with energy drinks. Peter Miller of Deakin University in Australia said that flawed studies published by you and your colleagues have “undermined the evidence base” on AMED and stymied necessary public health protections. He compared Red Bull’s tactics to the tobacco industry strategy of manufacturing doubt about established scientific facts.

- In February 2011, you testified to the legislature in Suffolk County, New York, in opposition to a proposed ban of sales of energy drinks to teenagers. You testified that there was no scientific evidence that AMED caused adverse behavior and compared the idea that energy drinks were responsible for negative outcomes to blaming shark attacks during summertime on an increase in ice cream sales. The proposed age limit in Suffolk County was rejected and two years later Suffolk County enacted a less restrictive version of the proposal.

Our questions:

- **What role did Red Bull have in the design and research for these studies? Did the company contribute to or approve the methodologies or any other aspects of the studies?**
- **What is your response to the concerns about your methodology raised by Howland and the Boston University team?**
- **Why did you refuse to change the methodology of your survey when Boston University raised concerns? Specifically, why did you proceed with a time limit that defined AMED as occurring within two hours of consuming an energy drink but considered the whole drinking session for alcohol alone?**
- **You co-authored at least six more studies that used the same time limits for measuring AMED and alcohol alone after Boston University withdrew from its contract. Why did you continue to use the same definitions and methodology?**
- **What is your response to criticism expressed by Miller and other researchers that your studies have distorted scientific understanding of the health risks of AMED and impeded necessary public health protections?**
- **How, if at all, have your views changed since you testified in Suffolk County in 2011, when you argued that the correlation between AMED and negative outcomes is caused by confounding factors, analogous to shark attacks occurring when ice cream sales increase during the summer?**

Red Bull and conflicts of interest

- In 2013, Utrecht University conducted an internal investigation into your partnership with Red Bull and concluded that there was no conflict of interest. However, in the final report, investigators included criticism of your research and your transparency in financial disclosures. According to the report, for one study, Red Bull paid you through your private banking account even though you had cited 'Utrecht University' as your affiliation. The commission that had conducted the investigation found that receiving private payment while declaring university affiliation was 'not transparent.' Experts we consulted describe this arrangement as problematic and highly unusual.
- Utrecht University said it informed you in 2014 that you were prohibited from securing outside funding for "research projects in the field of alcohol and related topics—such as hangover remedies and the effects of caffeinated beverages." It said this prohibition applied to work in your capacity as an Utrecht researcher, and that the decision was based on a shift in research priorities for your department from psychopharmacology to immunology. Utrecht did not publicly disclose this prohibition until our inquiries last month. In your response on July 8, you wrote: "I did not receive any such measure or instruction in 2014. Furthermore, no publication ban was

imposed on me, and to the best of my knowledge, I have never been prohibited from conducting research into these subjects.”

- From 2010 to 2022, you were a (co-)author on 18 publications that were funded or otherwise supported by Red Bull. Utrecht University states that it received funding from Red Bull for only two of these studies. For the remaining 16 studies (see list below), the University says that no contract was signed with Red Bull and that these studies should be considered your side projects. However, all of these studies listed Utrecht University as your affiliation.

2010 Positive effects of Red Bull® Energy Drink on driving performance during prolonged driving	Mets MA, Ketzer S, Blom C, van Gerven MH, van Willigenburg GM, Olivier B, Verster JC.
2011 Unjustified Concerns about Energy Drinks	Verster JC, Alford C.
2014 Motives for mixing alcohol with energy drinks and other nonalcoholic beverages, and consequences for overall alcohol consumption	Verster JC, Benson S, Scholey A.
2015 Effects of mixing alcohol with energy drink on objective and subjective intoxication: Results from a Dutch on-premise study	Verster, J. C., Benjaminsen, JME., van Lanen, JHM., van Stavel, NMD., & Olivier, B.
2016 Motives for mixing alcohol with energy drinks and other non-alcoholic beverages and its effects on overall alcohol consumption among UK students	Johnson SJ, Alford C, Verster JC, Stewart K.
2016 The effects of alcohol mixed with energy drink (AMED) on subjective intoxication and alertness: results from a double-blind placebo-controlled clinical trial	van de Loo AJ, van Andel N, van Gelder CA, Janssen BS, Titulaer J, Jansen J, Verster JC.
2016 A UK student survey investigating the effects of consuming alcohol mixed with energy drinks on overall alcohol consumption and alcohol-related negative consequences	Johnson SJ, Alford C, Stewart K, Verster JC.
2017 The Impact of Having a 15-min Break With and Without Consuming an Energy Drink on Prolonged Simulated Highway Driving	Verster, J. C., van de Loo, A. J. A. E., Bervoets, A. C., Mooren, L., & Roth, T.
2018 Caffeine intake and its sources: A review of national representative studies	Verster JC, Koenig J.
2018 Alcohol mixed with energy drink (AMED): A critical review and meta-analysis	Verster JC, Benson S, Johnson SJ, Alford C, Godefroy SB, Scholey A.
2018 Are energy drinks unique mixers in terms of their effects on alcohol consumption and negative alcohol-related consequences?	Johnson SJ, Alford C, Stewart K, Verster JC.
2020 Consumption Patterns of Alcohol and Alcohol mixed with Energy Drinks in Australian Students and Non-Students	Benson S, Verster JC, Scholey A.
2021 Risk-Taking Behavior and the Consumption of Alcohol Mixed with Energy Drink among Australian, Dutch and UK Students	Johnson SJ, Benson S, Scholey A, Alford C, Verster JC.

2021 A Cross-Cultural Comparison of the Effects of Alcohol Mixed with Energy Drink (AMED) Consumption on Overall Alcohol Consumption and Related Consequences	Benson S, Johnson SJ, Alford C, Scholey A, Verster JC.
2022 An on-premise study to investigate the effects of mixing alcohol with caffeinated beverages	Johnson SJ, Verster JC, Alford C.
2022 A Comparison Between Ecological Momentary Assessment and the Adapted-Quick Drinking Screen: Alcohol Mixed With Energy Drinks	Johnson SJ, Verster JC, Alford C.

- As listed above, in 2015 and 2016, you published two studies (Effects of mixing alcohol with energy drink on objective and subjective intoxication: Results from a Dutch on-premise study; The effects of alcohol mixed with energy drink (AMED) on subjective intoxication and alertness: results from a double-blind placebo-controlled clinical trial) where all co-authors are employees from Utrecht University. The two studies were funded by Red Bull, but the UU said they didn't receive any funding.

- As listed above, in 2017, you published a study on caffeine in collaboration with Austrian nutritionist Jürgen König from the University of Vienna. The study was funded by Red Bull. The University of Vienna confirms that it was aware of the funding, but claims that it did not receive any of the funding.

Our questions:

- You wrote that Utrecht never prohibited you from conducting research or publishing studies on certain topics, including alcohol and energy drinks.

Were you prohibited from seeking outside funding in your capacity as a Utrecht researcher for studies on these topics?

- If you were prohibited from seeking funding on these topics, what explanation did Utrecht provide to you? If you received no such prohibition, what is your response to UU's statement that you did?

- Did you inform Red Bull that Utrecht had prohibited you from seeking funding for further studies on alcohol and energy drinks in your university capacity? If so, why did the company continue to fund your research? If not, why not?

- For the 16 studies that were supported by Red Bull and that we listed above, please specify which studies you did in your capacity as a consultant for Red Bull.

- For the 16 studies that were supported by Red Bull and that we listed above, please specify which studies you were paid for via private companies or bank accounts.

- Fourteen of these studies were published following the 2013 investigation report and the university's decision to ban you from securing outside funding for caffeine-related studies. Why did you continue to list Utrecht University as your affiliation for these papers?

- For the two studies published in 2015 and 2016, in which all co-authors are

UU-employees and the UU says they didn't receive any funding, where did the funding go?

- In your 2017 caffeine study with Jürgen König, did you inform König about the funding from Red Bull? What was the funding for?

- How much money in total, and over what period of time, have you been paid by Red Bull to work on these publications, as a paid consultant or otherwise?

- In your role as a Red Bull consultant, what services did you provide? For what time periods did you have consultancies with Red Bull?

The Alcohol Hangover Research Group

- Since 2010, a group of scientists who study alcohol hangovers have participated in the Alcohol Hangover Research Group. You have been the central figure in this group.

- Meetings of the Alcohol Hangover Research Group included elegant meals and beverages. A 2011 meeting in Utrecht included extensive flights of Belgian beer presented by a sommelier, and a 2012 meeting in Wolfville, Nova Scotia included fresh lobsters at a lobster pound and a winery tour. You covered the tab for these expenses, according to two members of the group. These members said they believed that Red Bull may have paid for these meals and other group expenses. One described you as a charming host and also said that at these events you chain smoked, drank heavily sometimes starting at lunch time, and joked that you didn't get hangovers.

Our questions:

- Did Red Bull provide funding for meals, entertainment or other expenses at meetings of the Alcohol Hangover Research Group?

- How do you respond to the account that you drank heavily at these events?

Sen-Jam Pharmaceuticals and conflict of interest

From 2016 to 2025, you co-authored several studies that were sponsored by Sen-Jam Pharmaceutical about a purported hangover remedy produced by the company.

- In 2017 you published a study with a number of master's students and a researcher from Utrecht University. The article is titled "An Effective Hangover Treatment: Friend or Foe?" The finding: "social drinkers" do indeed see value in a hangover remedy and indicate that it does not cause them to drink more. You conclude: "Research shows that the vast majority will not increase their alcohol consumption." According to an expert we spoke with, this is "a completely illogical conclusion." "You can't

possibly determine how people will behave in the future based on a questionnaire,” he says, “because people are simply inclined to give socially desirable answers when it comes to topics such as drinking or smoking.” At the top of the article, you identify yourself as an employee of Utrecht University. However, the article states that the research was conducted by Neuroclinics, your private company. The university says it did not receive any funding for this study and that the money from Sen-Jam most likely went to Neuroclinics. The university said it did not know that you used your private company for conducting this research.

- In 2020, you participated in an experiment to investigate the effectiveness of Sen-Jam’s drug (SJP-001) ([The Effects of SJP-001 on Alcohol Hangover Severity: A Pilot Study](#)). Although the study included only five subjects, the authors draw a conclusion: The “new” drug “significantly” reduced the severity of hangovers, and the data “suggests” that the drug is effective. However, a closer look at the data reveals that the drug actually performs no better than when patients receive only naproxen, the pain reliever also available at Kruidvat. Here, too, you identify yourself as a researcher at Utrecht University. But at the time of publication all the authors served on Sen-Jam’s scientific advisory board. Utrecht University (UU) states it has nothing to do with this. “We must note that the employee conducted these studies in his capacity as a scientific advisor to the company,” Utrecht University replied to questions from Investico. The university states that it must grant prior approval for all outside activities and that any potential appearance of a conflict of interest must, of course, be transparently disclosed. “The University of Utrecht believes that this was not done, or was done insufficiently, in this case.”

- Sen-Jam is trying to portray a hangover as a medical condition. [At your suggestion](#), hangover is included in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), a list of diseases recognized by the World Health Organization. The company announced this change as major news, portraying you as “the father of alcohol hangover research.”

- In 2025, you co-authored a publication ([Alcohol hangover and cancer risk: The Impact of oxidative stress and systemic inflammation](#)) with Jacqueline Iversen of Sen-Jam in which you established a link between hangovers and an increased risk of cancer. “To promote healthy aging and a long life, it is therefore warranted to develop a safe and effective treatment for a hangover,” you wrote, after which you write that Sen-Jam’s remedy is “a promising hangover remedy.” An expert tells us that cancer is not caused by a hangover, but rather by alcohol itself. He also states that Sen-Jam’s remedy could even be dangerous because naproxen can cause stomach upset. At the bottom of the article, it is stated that you hold shares in Sen-Jam Pharmaceuticals. When asked whether the university had been informed by you that you were co-authoring a scientific publication with students in collaboration with the company in which you hold shares, Utrecht University replied, “No.”

- For all the above studies the university said you didn't inform them you were conducting the studies as a consultant and that the university didn't give you permission for it. Utrecht University also said that you have been authorized to perform consulting and advisory work as ancillary activities. But what went wrong was that A) the scope of those secondary activities remained unclear, B) you carried out consulting work through your own company, and C) despite this, as a UU employee, you were listed as the author of the scientific articles, which suggests that the UU endorses the content of these articles, even though the UU cannot take responsibility for that content. This is according to the university not in line with the provisions of the Regeling Nevenwerkzaamheden.

- The university states that, "given what we know now, UU should, in any case, have asked more questions earlier about the nature of the ancillary activities and their funding, and may have had to decide to explicitly deny the employee permission to engage in them. UU believes that the researcher himself was also not sufficiently transparent about the exact nature and scope of the secondary employment. An investigation into this matter is underway, and discussions are being held."

- On your Utrecht University profile page, we see that you indicate that all your ancillary activities ended as of May 1, 2026.

Our questions:

- **Why did you choose to have your private company conduct the study "An Effective Hangover Treatment: Friend or Foe?"?**
- **In 2013 the integrity commission stated that receiving private payment while declaring university affiliation was 'not transparent.' Why did you still choose to list Utrecht University as the lead institution for these studies, even though they stem from your work as a consultant for the company?**
- **Why are you conducting research with Utrecht University students in collaboration with a company in which you hold shares? Is this a conflict of interest?**
- **What is your response to the university's statement that you didn't inform them that you would be conducting studies for Sen-Jam and that you hold shares in that company?**
- **How do you view Utrecht University's response, in which it distances itself from these publications?**
- **How much money in total did you receive from Sen-Jam for conducting these studies?**
- **Why did you end all your ancillary activities as of May 1, 2026?**

We look forward to discussing the important questions above with you. You can reach Simon Dequeker at dequeker@platform-investico.nl or [+316 19 12 34 74](tel:+31619123474) and

Sasha Chavkin at sasha@theexamination.org or [+1 917 796-1865](tel:+19177961865). Our deadline for conducting the interview or receiving a written response is the end of **Wednesday, July 15.**

Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Antwoord 15 juli Verster

Dear Mr. NAAM,

Thank you for the opportunity to reply to your questions. Below are my answers.

Our questions:

- What role did Red Bull have in the design and research for these studies? Did the company contribute to or approve the methodologies or any other aspects of the studies?

REPLY: The study methodology was determined by the team of Utrecht University. Red Bull had no role in the design of the study or the research. This is mentioned in the conflict of interest sections of the publications. Financial relationships were also disclosed in the conflict of interest statements of the publications.

- What is your response to the concerns about your methodology raised by Howland and the Boston University team?

REPLY: Scientific disagreement about methodology is common in research. Different researchers may hold different views on the most appropriate methodology for addressing a particular research question. Such discussions are a normal part of the scientific process.

- Why did you refuse to change the methodology of your survey when Boston University raised concerns? Specifically, why did you proceed with a time limit that defined AMED as occurring within two hours of consuming an energy drink but considered the whole drinking session for alcohol alone?

REPLY: The purpose of the study was to replicate the original Dutch study using the same methodology, so that the findings could be compared directly. Changing the methodology would have defeated that objective.

Regarding the design, there was no difference in the time period assessed for AMED and Alcohol only occasion. Both comprised 'an evening of alcohol consumption', and the duration was defined as the time (hours) that alcohol was consumed. However, to aid the understanding of the participants we provided a definition for the AMED occasion. The definition was intended to identify an AMED drinking occasion, not to shorten the observation period. The energy drink should have been consumed within +/- 2 hours of consuming the alcohol. This was to prevent that if the consumption of energy drink and alcohol were very much apart in time (e.g., an energy drink in the morning and alcohol consumption in the evening) would have been wrongly counted as an AMED occasion.

- You co-authored at least six more studies that used the same time limits for measuring AMED and alcohol alone after Boston University withdrew from its contract. Why did you continue to use the same definitions and methodology?

REPLY: Subsequent studies addressed the same research question and therefore continued to use the same predefined methodology in order to allow comparison across studies in different countries/cultures.

- What is your response to criticism expressed by Miller and other researchers that your studies have distorted scientific understanding of the health risks of AMED and impeded necessary public health protections?

REPLY: Academic debate and differing scientific viewpoints are common. Different methodologies and research questions can legitimately lead to different findings. We have discussed these methodological issues in several peer-reviewed publications, allowing the scientific community to evaluate and debate the evidence.

- How, if at all, have your views changed since you testified in Suffolk County in 2011, when you argued that the correlation between AMED and negative outcomes is caused by confounding factors, analogous to shark attacks occurring when ice cream sales increase during the summer?

REPLY: No. My view has not changed. Correlational associations do not by themselves establish causality. My interpretation of the available evidence continues to be informed by the totality of published research, including systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

- You wrote that Utrecht never prohibited you from conducting research or publishing studies on certain topics, including alcohol and energy drinks. Were you prohibited from seeking outside funding in your capacity as a Utrecht researcher for studies on these topics?

REPLY: To the best of my knowledge, I did not receive any such measure or instruction in 2014 or thereafter. Nor, to the best of my knowledge, was I ever prohibited from conducting research or publishing on these topics.

- If you were prohibited from seeking funding on these topics, what explanation did Utrecht provide to you? If you received no such prohibition, what is your response to UU's statement that you did?

REPLY: Not applicable, as I did not receive such a prohibition.

- Did you inform Red Bull that Utrecht had prohibited you from seeking funding for further studies on alcohol and energy drinks in your university capacity? If so, why did the company continue to fund your research? If not, why not?

REPLY: Not applicable (see previous answers).

- For the 16 studies that were supported by Red Bull and that we listed above, please specify which studies you did in your capacity as a consultant for Red Bull.

REPLY: None of the empirical **studies** were conducted by me in my capacity as a consultant for Red Bull. These studies were conducted as academic research projects involving Utrecht University or collaborating universities.

- For the 16 studies that were supported by Red Bull and that we listed above, please specify which studies you were paid for via private companies or bank accounts.

REPLY: None of the empirical research studies were conducted by me in my capacity as a consultant for Red Bull. For two scholarly review publications ('Caffeine intake and its sources: A review of national representative studies' and 'Alcohol mixed with energy drink (AMED): A critical review and meta-analysis'), I received consultancy fees from Red Bull for my contribution to writing these review papers. This financial relationship was transparently disclosed in the conflict of interest statements of the publications."

- Fourteen of these studies were published following the 2013 investigation report and the university's decision to ban you from securing outside funding for caffeine-related studies. Why did you continue to list Utrecht University as your affiliation for these papers?

REPLY: These research collaborations with UWE and Swinburne University researchers were part of my regular academic work at Utrecht University. Utrecht University was aware of these publications and the fact that I was co-supervisor of a PhD-student on alcohol and energy drinks at UWE University. To the best of my knowledge, Utrecht University never instructed me that using my Utrecht University affiliation on these publications was not permitted.

- For the two studies published in 2015 and 2016, in which all co-authors are UU-employees and the UU says they didn't receive any funding, where did the funding go?

REPLY: These studies formed part of Lydia de Haan's PhD project under the contract between Utrecht University and Red Bull. The funding for that contract was provided to Utrecht University.

- In your 2017 caffeine study with Jürgen König, did you inform König about the funding from Red Bull? What was the funding for?

REPLY: I can not recollect discussions with Jürgen König from that long ago. The publication transparently states "This review was supported by Red Bull.". The support was to compensate time for writing the review.

- How much money in total, and over what period of time, have you been paid by Red Bull to work on these publications, as a paid consultant or otherwise?

REPLY: I cannot disclose confidential contractual information that is subject to contractual confidentiality obligations.

- In your role as a Red Bull consultant, what services did you provide? For what time periods did you have consultancies with Red Bull?

REPLY: I cannot disclose confidential contractual information regarding consultancy activities because these are subject to a confidentiality agreement with Red Bull.

- Did Red Bull provide funding for meals, entertainment or other expenses at meetings of the Alcohol Hangover Research Group?

REPLY: Red Bull did not fund the Alcohol Hangover Research Group, including meals, social activities, or other meeting expenses.

For the record, the description of the Utrecht meeting in your introductory text is not factually correct. The beer tasting formed part of the social programme and took place in a local student café. It was conducted by a local member of staff at the venue, not by a Belgian sommelier brought in for the event.

- How do you respond to the account that you drank heavily at these events?

REPLY: I do not recognize this characterization. The scientific programme consisted of a full day of scientific presentations and discussions. Social activities, including dinner and drinks, took place only after the scientific sessions had concluded.

- **Why did you choose to have your private company conduct the study “An Effective Hangover Treatment: Friend or Foe?”?**

REPLY: Utrecht University approved my consultancy work via my Company NeuroClinics. As part of this consultancy, I conducted a survey for Sen-Jam. In line with the instructions for

ancillary activities (Nevenactiviteiten), no University facilities were used, and the work was conducted in my free time.

As alcohol hangover research formed part of my regular academic activities, I used my Utrecht University affiliation. The publication transparently states: 'Data collection was conducted by NeuroClinics and funded by Sen-Jam Pharmaceutical. Unrestricted use of the data was granted to the authors.'

- **In 2013 the integrity commission stated that receiving private payment while declaring university affiliation was ‘not transparent.’ Why did you still choose to list Utrecht University as the lead institution for these studies, even though they stem from your work as a consultant for the company?**

REPLY: Most of these publications formed part of my regular academic activities at Utrecht University. Where financial relationships existed, these were disclosed in the conflict of interest statements in accordance with the journal requirements.

Why are you conducting research with Utrecht University students in collaboration with a company in which you hold shares? Is this a conflict of interest?

REPLY: Holding shares does not in itself constitute a conflict of interest. Potential conflicts of interest should be transparently disclosed, and my financial interests were disclosed in the relevant publications in accordance with the journal requirements.

- **What is your response to the university’s statement that you didn’t inform them that you would be conducting studies for Sen-Jam and that you hold shares in that company?**

REPLY: I informed Utrecht University about my consultancy activities through NeuroClinics, and these ancillary activities were approved. Where required by the journals, I disclosed my shareholding in Sen-Jam in the conflict of interest statements.

- **How do you view Utrecht University’s response, in which it distances itself from these publications?**

REPLY: These publications related to my academic field of expertise. They were published using my Utrecht University affiliation. It therefore surprises me that these publications now appear to be characterized differently.

- **How much money in total did you receive from Sen-Jam for conducting these studies?**

REPLY: I cannot disclose confidential contractual information regarding consultancy activities because these are subject to a confidentiality agreement with Sen-Jam.

- **Why did you end all your ancillary activities as of May 1, 2026?**

REPLY: Since May 1, 2026 I am on sick leave and ended all my professional activities, including my consultancy work.

Thank you for the opportunity to reply to your questions.

Finally, I like to state that several statements attributed to Utrecht University in your questions have never been communicated to me directly. I am therefore unable to comment on those statements beyond the responses above.

Best regards,

Joris Verster