Unspecified Caffeine-Related Disorder

Code: 305.90 (F15.929)

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Caffeine Intoxication
Diagnostic Criteria 305.90 (F15.929)

A. Recent consumption of caffeine (typically a high dose well in excess of 250 mg).
B. Five (or more) of the following signs or symptoms developing during, or shortly after, caffeine use:
1. Restlessness.
2. Nervousness.
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3. Excitement.
4. Insomnia.
5. Flushed face.
6. Diuresis.
7. Gastrointestinal disturbance.
8. Muscle twitching.
9. Rambling flow of thought and speech.
10. Tachycardia or cardiac arrhythmia.
11. Periods of inexhaustibility.
12. Psychomotor agitation.
C. The signs or symptoms in Criterion B cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
D. The signs or symptoms are not attributable to another medical condition and are not better explained by another mental disorder, including intoxication with another substance.
Diagnostic Features

Caffeine can be consumed from a number of different sources, including coffee, tea, caffeinated soda, "energy" drinks, over-the-counter analgesics and cold remedies, energy aids (e.g., drinks), weight-loss aids, and chocolate. Caffeine is also increasingly being used as an additive to vitamins and to food products. More than 85% of children and adults consume caffeine regularly. Some caffeine users display symptoms consistent with problematic use, including tolerance and withdrawal (see "Caffeine Withdrawal" later in this chapter); the data are not available at this time to determine the clinical significance of a caffeine use disorder and its prevalence. In contrast, there is evidence that caffeine withdrawal and caffeine intoxication are clinically significant and sufficiently prevalent.
The essential feature of caffeine intoxication is recent consumption of caffeine and five or more signs or symptoms that develop during or shortly after caffeine use (Criteria A and B). Symptoms include restlessness, nervousness, excitement, insomnia, flushed face, diuresis, and gastrointestinal complaints, which can occur with low doses (e.g., 200 mg) in vulnerable individuals such as children, the elderly, or individuals who have not been exposed to caffeine previously. Symptoms that generally appear at levels of more than 1 g/day include muscle twitching, rambling flow of thought and speech, tachycardia or cardiac arrhythmia, periods of inexhaustibility, and psychomotor agitation. Caffeine intoxication may not occur despite high caffeine intake because of the development of tolerance. The signs or symptoms must cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (Criterion C). The signs or symptoms must not be attributable to another medical condition and are not better explained by another mental disorder (e.g., an anxiety disorder) or intoxication with another substance (Criterion D).
Associated Features Supporting Diagnosis

Mild sensory disturbances (e.g., ringing in the ears and flashes of light) may occur with high doses of caffeine. Although large doses of caffeine can increase heart rate, smaller doses can slow heart rate. Whether excess caffeine intake can cause headaches is unclear. On physical examination, agitation, restlessness, sweating, tachycardia, flushed face, and increased bowel motility may be seen. Caffeine blood levels may provide important information for diagnosis, particularly when the individual is a poor historian, although these levels are not diagnostic by themselves in view of the individual variation in response to caffeine.
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Prevalence

The prevalence of caffeine intoxication in the general population is unclear. In the United States, approximately 7% of individuals in the population may experience five or more symptoms along with functional impairment consistent with a diagnosis of caffeine intoxication.
Development and Course

Consistent with a half-life of caffeine of approximately 4–6 hours, caffeine intoxication symptoms usually remit within the first day or so and do not have any known long-lasting consequences. However, individuals who consume very high doses of caffeine (i.e., 5–10 g) may require immediate medical attention, as such doses can be lethal.
With advancing age, individuals are likely to demonstrate increasingly intense reactions to caffeine, with greater complaints of interference with sleep or feelings of hyperarousal. Caffeine intoxication among young individuals after consumption of highly caffeinated products, including energy drinks, has been observed. Children and adolescents may be at increased risk for caffeine intoxication because of low body weight, lack of tolerance, and lack of knowledge about the pharmacological effects of caffeine.
Risk and Prognostic Factors

Environmental. Caffeine intoxication is often seen among individuals who use caffeine less frequently or in those who have recently increased their caffeine intake by a substantial amount. Furthermore, oral contraceptives significantly decrease the elimination of caffeine and consequently may increase the risk of intoxication.
Genetic and physiological. Genetic factors may affect risk of caffeine intoxication.
Functional Consequences of Caffeine Intoxication

Impairment from caffeine intoxication may have serious consequences, including dysfunction at work or school, social indiscretions, or failure to fulfill role obligations. Moreover, extremely high doses of caffeine can be fatal. In some cases, caffeine intoxication may precipitate a caffeine-induced disorder.
Differential Diagnosis

Other mental disorders. Caffeine intoxication may be characterized by symptoms (e.g., panic attacks) that resemble primary mental disorders. To meet criteria for caffeine intoxication, the symptoms must not be associated with another medical condition or another mental disorder, such as an anxiety disorder, that could better explain them. Manic episodes; panic disorder; generalized anxiety disorder; amphetamine intoxication; sedative, hypnotic, or anxiolytic withdrawal or tobacco withdrawal; sleep disorders; and medication-induced side effects (e.g., akathisia) can cause a clinical picture that is similar to that of caffeine intoxication. Other caffeine-induced disorders. The temporal relationship of the symptoms to increased caffeine use or to abstinence from caffeine helps to establish the diagnosis. Caffeine intoxication is differentiated from caffeine-induced anxiety disorder, with onset during intoxication (see "Substance/Medication-Induced Anxiety Disorder" in the chapter "Anxiety Disorders"), and caffeine-induced sleep disorder, with onset during intoxication (see "Substance/Medication-Induced Sleep Disorder" in the chapter "Sleep-Wake Disorders"), by the fact that the symptoms in these latter disorders are in excess of those usually associated with caffeine intoxication and are severe enough to warrant independent clinical attention.
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Comorbidity

Typical dietary doses of caffeine have not been consistently associated with medical problems. However, heavy use (e.g., >400 mg) can cause or exacerbate anxiety and somatic symptoms and gastrointestinal distress. With acute, extremely high doses of caffeine, grand mal seizures and respiratory failure may result in death. Excessive caffeine use is associated with depressive disorders, bipolar disorders, eating disorders, psychotic disorders, sleep disorders, and substance-related disorders, whereas individuals with anxiety disorders are more likely to avoid caffeine.
Caffeine Withdrawal
Diagnostic Criteria 292.0 (F15.93)

A. Prolonged daily use of caffeine.
B. Abrupt cessation of or reduction in caffeine use, followed within 24 hours by three (or more) of the following signs or symptoms:
1. Headache.
2. Marked fatigue or drowsiness.
3. Dysphoric mood, depressed mood, or irritability.
4. Difficulty concentrating.
5. Flu-like symptoms (nausea, vomiting, or muscle pain/stiffness).
C. The signs or symptoms in Criterion B cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
D. The signs or symptoms are not associated with the physiological effects of another medical condition (e.g., migraine, viral illness) and are not better explained by another mental disorder, including intoxication or withdrawal from another substance.
Diagnostic Features

The essential feature of caffeine withdrawal is the presence of a characteristic withdrawal syndrome that develops after the abrupt cessation of (or substantial reduction in) prolonged daily caffeine ingestion (Criterion B). The caffeine withdrawal syndrome is indicated by three or more of the following (Criterion B): headache; marked fatigue or drowsiness; dysphoric mood, depressed mood, or irritability; difficulty concentrating; and flu-like symptoms (nausea, vomiting, or muscle pain/stiffness). The withdrawal syndrome causes clinical significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning (Criterion C). The symptoms must not be associated with the physiological effects of another medical condition and are not better explained by another mental disorder (Criterion D).
Headache is the hallmark feature of caffeine withdrawal and may be diffuse, gradual in development, throbbing, severe, and sensitive to movement. However, other symptoms of caffeine withdrawal can occur in the absence of headache. Caffeine is the most widely used behaviorally active drug in the world and is present in many different types of beverages (e.g., coffee, tea, maté, soft drinks, energy drinks), foods, energy aids, medications, and dietary supplements. Because caffeine ingestion is often integrated into social customs and daily rituals (e.g., coffee break, tea time), some caffeine consumers may be unaware of their physical dependence on caffeine. Thus, caffeine withdrawal symptoms could be unexpected and misattributed to other causes (e.g., the flu, migraine). Furthermore, caffeine withdrawal symptoms may occur when individuals are required to abstain from foods and beverages prior to medical procedures or when a usual caffeine dose is missed because of a change in routine (e.g., during travel, weekends).
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The probability and severity of caffeine withdrawal generally increase as a function of usual daily caffeine dose. However, there is large variability among individuals and within individuals across different episodes in the incidence, severity, and time course of withdrawal symptoms. Caffeine withdrawal symptoms may occur after abrupt cessation of relatively low chronic daily doses of caffeine (i.e., 100 mg).
Associated Features Supporting Diagnosis

Caffeine abstinence has been shown to be associated with impaired behavioral and cognitive performance (e.g., sustained attention). Electroencephalographic studies have shown that caffeine withdrawal symptoms are significantly associated with increases in theta power and decreases in beta-2 power. Decreased motivation to work and decreased sociability have also been reported during caffeine withdrawal. Increased analgesic use during caffeine withdrawal has been documented.
Prevalence

More than 85% of adults and children in the United States regularly consume caffeine, with adult caffeine consumers ingesting about 280 mg/day on average. The incidence and prevalence of the caffeine withdrawal syndrome in the general population are unclear. In the United States, headache may occur in approximately 50% of cases of caffeine abstinence. In attempts to permanently stop caffeine use, more than 70% of individuals may experience at least one caffeine withdrawal symptom (47% may experience headache), and 24% may experience headache plus one or more other symptoms as well as functional impairment due to withdrawal. Among individuals who abstain from caffeine for at least 24 hours but are not trying to permanently stop caffeine use, 11% may experience headache plus one or more other symptoms as well as functional impairment. Caffeine consumers can decrease the incidence of caffeine withdrawal by using caffeine daily or only infrequently (e.g., no more than 2 consecutive days). Gradual reduction in caffeine over a period of days or weeks may decrease the incidence and severity of caffeine withdrawal.
Development and Course

Symptoms usually begin 12–24 hours after the last caffeine dose and peak after 1–2 days of abstinence. Caffeine withdrawal symptoms last for 2–9 days, with the possibility of withdrawal headaches occurring for up to 21 days. Symptoms usually remit rapidly (within 30–60 minutes) after re-ingestion of caffeine.
Caffeine is unique in that it is a behaviorally active drug that is consumed by individuals of nearly all ages. Rates of caffeine consumption and overall level of caffeine consumption increase with age until the early to mid-30s and then level off. Although caffeine withdrawal among children and adolescents has been documented, relatively little is known about risk factors for caffeine withdrawal among this age group. The use of highly caffeinated energy drinks is increasing with in young individuals, which could increase the risk for caffeine withdrawal.
Risk and Prognostic Factors

Temperamental. Heavy caffeine use has been observed among individuals with mental disorders, including eating disorders; smokers; prisoners; and drug and alcohol abusers. Thus, these individuals could be at higher risk for caffeine withdrawal upon acute caffeine abstinence.
Environmental. The unavailability of caffeine is an environmental risk factor for incipient withdrawal symptoms. While caffeine is legal and usually widely available, there are conditions in which caffeine use may be restricted, such as during medical procedures, pregnancy, hospitalizations, religious observances, wartime, travel, and research partici-
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pation. These external environmental circumstances may precipitate a withdrawal syndrome in vulnerable individuals.
Genetic and physiological factors. Genetic factors appear to increase vulnerability to caffeine withdrawal, but no specific genes have been identified.
Course modifiers. Caffeine withdrawal symptoms usually remit within 30–60 minutes of reexposure to caffeine. Doses of caffeine significantly less than one's usual daily dose may be sufficient to prevent or attenuate caffeine withdrawal symptoms (e.g., consumption of 25 mg by an individual who typically consumes 300 mg).
Culture-Related Diagnostic Issues

Habitual caffeine consumers who fast for religious reasons may be at increased risk for caffeine withdrawal.
Functional Consequences of

Caffeine Withdrawal Disorder
Caffeine withdrawal symptoms can vary from mild to extreme, at times causing functional impairment in normal daily activities. Rates of functional impairment range from 10% to 55% (median 13%), with rates as high as 73% found among individuals who also show other problematic features of caffeine use. Examples of functional impairment include being unable to work, exercise, or care for children; staying in bed all day; missing religious services; ending a vacation early; and cancelling a social gathering. Caffeine withdrawal headaches may be described by individuals as "the worst headaches" ever experienced. Decrements in cognitive and motor performance have also been observed.
Differential Diagnosis

Other medical disorders and medical side effects. Several disorders should be considered in the differential diagnosis of caffeine withdrawal. Caffeine withdrawal can mimic migraine and other headache disorders, viral illnesses, sinus conditions, tension, other drug withdrawal states (e.g., from amphetamines, cocaine), and medication side effects. The final determination of caffeine withdrawal should rest on a determination of the pattern and amount consumed, the time interval between caffeine abstinence and onset of symptoms, and the particular clinical features presented by the individual. A challenge dose of caffeine followed by symptom remission may be used to confirm the diagnosis.
Comorbidity

Caffeine withdrawal may be associated with major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, antisocial personality disorder in adults, moderate to severe alcohol use disorder, and cannabis and cocaine use.
Other Caffeine-Induced Disorders
The following caffeine-induced disorders are described in other chapters of the manual with disorders with which they share phenomenology (see the substance/medication-induced mental disorders in these chapters): caffeine-induced anxiety disorder ("Anxiety Disorders") and caffeine-induced sleep disorder ("Sleep-Wake Disorders"). These caf-