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How Does Caffeine Influence Memory? Drug, Experimental, and Demographic Factors

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Abstract

29 Caffeine is a widely used nootropic drug, but its effects on memory in healthy participants
30 have not been sufficiently evaluated. Here we review evidence of the effects of caffeine on
31 different types of memory, and the associated drug, experimental, and demographical factors.
32 There is limited evidence that caffeine affects performance in memory tasks beyond
33 improved reaction times. For drug factors, a dose-response relationship may exist but
34 findings are inconsistent. Moreover, there is evidence that the source of caffeine can
35 modulate its effects on memory. For experimental factors, past studies often lacked a baseline
36 control for diet and sleep and none discussed the possible reversal of withdrawal effect due to
37 pre-experimental fasting. For demographic factors, caffeine may interact with sex and age,
38 and the direction of the effect may depend on the dose, individual tolerance, and metabolism
39 at baseline. Future studies should incorporate these considerations, as well as providing
40 continued evidence on the effect of caffeine in visuospatial, prospective, and implicit memory
41 measures.

42

43 **Keywords:** *Caffeine, Caffeine-Containing Foodstuffs, Memory, Cognitive Resources,*
44 *Resource Recovery*

45 **Word count:** 12,231

47 Most of us believe that caffeine can make us more alert, focused, and productive. Indeed,
48 caffeine is the most consumed psychoactive and nootropic drug worldwide (Nehlig, 1999). It
49 is estimated that worldwide around two billion cups of coffee are consumed daily (British
50 Coffee Association, n.d.). Further caffeine intake comes from tea, energy or sports drinks,
51 and various chocolate products (Fitt et al., 2013). While many advocates for the
52 neuroprotective and cognitive-enhancing effects of caffeine (McLellan et al., 2016; Panza et
53 al., 2015), others proposed that the magnitude of these benefits are negligible, furthermore, a
54 higher dose can have detrimental effects on physical and mental health (Nehlig, 2010, 1999).
55 As past literature tended to treat memory as a subset of cognitive functions, the specific effect
56 of caffeine on memory has not been thoroughly discussed. As with all other nootropics,
57 research on caffeine faces many issues regarding ethical challenges in drug administration
58 and treatment reliability across experimental settings (Crespo-Bujosa and Rodríguez, 2019;
59 Ricci, 2020). Few studies have considered individual differences in caffeine tolerance and
60 metabolism due to genetic, or demographic variations in the number of adenosine receptors
61 (Nehlig, 2018).

62 Although there has been a large body of literature examining the effects of caffeine in
63 animal models, these effects cannot be directly translated to human participants due to two
64 major concerns. Firstly, in animal models, the treatment effects of a drug can be established
65 causally through rigorous control over confounding factors, such as diet, access to the drug,
66 animals' immediate environment, stress levels, metabolism, and circadian rhythms (Gallagher
67 and Rapp, 1997; Granholm, 2010). It is also possible to add or remove a single factor at a
68 time to systematically explore its interaction with the drug. Moreover, animals can be
69 screened with an injection of radioactive tracers or sacrificed post-treatment for a more
70 detailed study of the drug pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics. In contrast, human
71 studies have limited control over many confounding factors. Although it is possible to engage
72 participants in multiple sessions (Baur et al., 2021), these designs can still be challenged by
73 attrition. Alternatively, information about individual caffeine consumption and other
74 confounding factors can be collected at a greater resources cost, as a result, few studies have
75 yet to take a comprehensive approach. The second reason is based on the differences in
76 experimental design and procedures between animal and human memory studies. Animal
77 studies typically assess memory through visuospatial learning tasks such as maze navigation,
78 new objects or environmental exploration (Vorhees and Williams, 2014), whereas human

79 memory studies can employ various visuospatial and verbal stimuli. This distinction suggests
80 that testing different types of memory in animal studies is less feasible. For example, human
81 working memory (WM) incorporates temporary information maintenance, manipulation, and
82 information updating (Bledowski et al., 2010, 2009), assessing these separate elements has
83 yet to be achieved in animal studies (Keeler and Robbins, 2011; Vorhees and Williams,
84 2014). Additionally, the existing definition of human episodic memory involves a “self-
85 awareness” process that can be examined through behavioural testing (Tulving, 2002), but is
86 difficult to establish in animal models (Madan, 2020). Tasks probing source memory has
87 provided valuable insights into the dissociation between familiarity and recollection in human
88 participants (Yonelinas, 2002, 2001; Yonelinas et al., 2010), but are far less used in animal
89 studies (Crystal, 2016). The lack of distinction between familiarity and recollection in animal
90 studies questions the validity of using animal models to test human episodic memory (Madan,
91 2020). With regards to long-term memory, while humans can be assessed at random intervals
92 after the initial learning phase, separating learning from performance can be more ambiguous
93 in animal models. Equally challenging is individual differences in animal’s motivation or
94 consistency in reward responses in prolonged training and testing (Keeler and Robbins, 2011;
95 Vorhees and Williams, 2014).

96 Given the difficulty of comparing across human and animal studies, in this review, we
97 focus on the treatment effect of caffeine in healthy human participants. We explore how
98 caffeine and the associated drug administrative, experimental, and demographic factors affect
99 memory in healthy participants, as well as caffeine as a cognitive enhancer by comparing its
100 effectiveness with other approaches, such as glucose intake and sleeping. In discussion, we
101 describe several animal studies which examined caffeine’s effects on memory and associated
102 drug mechanisms. While similar mechanisms may appear in healthy humans, changes in
103 these biomolecular pathways do not always manifest as memory outcomes. Therefore, we
104 focus on discussing human studies, and direct interested readers to other reviews with more
105 detailed animal work.

106 **1. Does Caffeine Affect Memory?**

107 We examined the effect of caffeine based on the types of memory. Due to the wide range of
108 memory measures employed by reviewed studies, we categorised the findings by the type of
109 memory measures used. In each section, we first briefly defined the type of memory,
110 followed by describing studies adopting relevant measures.

111 Among reviewed literature, the findings generally map onto *acute* or *long-term* effects
112 of caffeine. Here we refer to the *acute* effect as studies investigating the one-off, short-term
113 effects of caffeine administered in laboratory experiments. Although some studies required
114 participants to return for multiple testing sessions, few regularly administered caffeine during
115 the inter-session intervals. Given that in human participants, the maximum caffeine tolerance
116 is achieved after two to seven days of regular consumption (Denaro et al., 1990; Griffiths and
117 Woodson, 1988; Hewlett and Smith, 2007; James, 1998; Nehlig, 1999), this type of design
118 does not permit observation of the *long-term* effects of caffeine associated with regular
119 consumption over an extended period. Conversely, *long-term* effects refer to studies
120 analysing the associations between *habitual* consumption and memory, such as studies using
121 epidemiological or time-series designs. Although having better ecological validity and
122 allowing for longitudinal analysis, in most instances, these studies adopted a quasi-
123 experimental design that had limited control over confounding factors, such as dietary intake
124 and sleep cycles. Therefore, any differences may reflect the effects of habitual caffeine
125 consumption or other confounding factors. In each section, we also grouped the findings by
126 these two designs. We will discuss the issues of tolerance, withdrawal, and withdrawal
127 reversal related to these designs in later sections.

128 **1.1. Working Memory (WM)**

129 Working memory (WM) is defined as the memory system which simultaneously holds and
130 manipulate information of different modalities (Baddeley, 2012, 2000, 1992; Baddeley and
131 Hitch, 1974). By this definition, WM measures are tasks involving multimodal attentional
132 control, rapid information processing, temporary maintenance, and manipulation of mental
133 representations. Here, we organise the findings on the effect of caffeine by types of WM
134 tasks.

135 **Reaction Time.** Jarvis (1993) and Hameleers et al. (2000) examined long-term outcomes of
136 habitual caffeine consumption in a self-reported survey, and both used the simple
137 (SRT)/choice reaction time (CRT) tasks to evaluate information processing and psychomotor
138 skills. As both skills depend on WM capacity (WMC), the reaction time (RT) task can be
139 considered as a WM task (Hülür et al., 2019). In SRT, participants respond to a single
140 predefined stimulus as quickly as possible, whereas in CRT, participants respond
141 correspondingly to two or more stimuli as quickly as possible. Both Jarvis (1993) and
142 Hameleers et al. (2000) reported a significant dose-response relationship between the amount

143 of caffeine habitually consumed from preferred daily drinks and improved performance in
144 these RT tasks.

145 In studies examining the acute effects of caffeine, intake of a personally preferred
146 amount of caffeine via oral capsules improved performance in SRT (Lanini et al., 2016).
147 Furthermore, a standard dose of 4 mg/kg bodyweight caffeine also improved accuracy and
148 RTs in digit vigilance (Smith et al., 1992). One longitudinal study evaluating the effect of
149 regular daily caffeine consumption on sleep deprivation provided participants with regular
150 drop coffee (101 ± 0.6 mg caffeine per 200 g) or decaffeinated coffee prepared in the same
151 way (2.4 ± 0.05 mg caffeine per 200 g) two times a day. The researchers elaborated that this
152 administration procedure mimics the real world European consumption habits (~ 300 mg
153 daily). They found that when sleep-deprived (restricted to five hours per night) over the
154 course of five days, those receiving regular coffee improved in speed, lapses, and accuracy in
155 the RT task through the first and second testing days, whereas the decaffeinated group
156 showed a persistent decline across five days (Baur et al., 2021). However, another study
157 comparing 100 mg caffeine added into decaffeinated coffee with regular decaffeinated coffee
158 (control) and water with coffee flavouring (placebo) reported the performance-enhancing
159 effect of caffeine only in digit vigilance, but not the SRT (Haskell-Ramsay et al., 2018).

160 **Digit Span.** Several studies used digit span as a measure of WM, which examines the
161 maximum amount of information one can temporarily hold in memory (Conway et al., 2005).
162 Lesk et al. (2009) found that participants' performance in this task was not affected by
163 consumption of caffeine-containing foodstuffs (CCFS) (assessed through self-report
164 questionnaire) within four hours before testing, though there was a trend for worse
165 performance associated with CCFS consumption. Where a standard dose of caffeine was
166 administered, both Schmitt et al. (2003) (100 mg) and Walters and Lesk (2016, 2015) (200
167 mg) failed to find an effect of caffeine on this task. Lastly, Lanini et al. (2016) tested
168 participants with a dual-task digit span by using a concurrent, paper and pencil based
169 visuospatial task, they also did not find any impact of caffeine.

170 **Sternberg and N-back.** These tasks require participants to maintain monitoring of a
171 continuous stream of stimuli and respond to only a subset (Jaeggi et al., 2010; Sternberg,
172 1966). Compared to RT tasks, these tasks involve retaining a larger amount of information;
173 compared to the digit span, these tasks require more complex and continuous updating of
174 mental representations in addition to information retention (Conway et al., 2005).

175 Performance in these tasks is indexed through accuracy, RTs, or both. Klaassen et al. (2013)
176 and Haskell-Ramsay et al. (2018) tested the effects of 100 mg caffeine added to decaffeinated
177 coffee and both failed to find any effects on the Sternberg task. Similarly, ingesting 100 mg
178 (Koppelstaetter et al., 2008) or 200 mg (Haller et al., 2017) caffeine capsules, or direct
179 inhalation from 1% caffeine-containing vaporiser (Ueda and Nakao, 2019) did not affect
180 performance in the N-back tasks, regardless of task difficulty (0, 2, or 3 back) or type of
181 stimuli (letters or numbers) used. Baur et al. (2021) demonstrated that among sleep-deprived
182 but otherwise healthy young adults, ingesting regular coffee that matches their daily
183 consumption habits improved speed, but not accuracy in the N-back tasks (1, 2, or 3 back)
184 relative to their baseline performance. Conversely, the decaffeinated group showed a
185 persistent decline compared to baseline in speed (in 1 back only) and accuracy.

186 **Other.** An oddball task (visual or auditory) requires participants to respond mentally or
187 physically to an infrequent target presented amid frequently occurring stimuli and
188 infrequently occurring distractors. This process involves ongoing attentional control and
189 memory updating (Yurgil and Golob, 2013). Using this task, Trunk et al. (2015) reported that
190 caffeine capsules (5, 10, 20, and 100 mg) added to water significantly reduced RTs in trials
191 with high target frequencies. Furthermore, using a comprehensive cognitive battery, Soar et
192 al. (2016) found that even 50 mg caffeine added into decaffeinated coffee improved
193 performance in a planning task, but not a prioritisation task, compared to the decaffeinated
194 coffee alone.

195 Despite the enhancing effects reported in these two studies, many have reported a
196 smaller magnitude or no effects of caffeine on other WM measures: Haskell-Ramsay et al.
197 (2018) did not find any main effect of caffeine on a visuospatial WM task. Hameleers et al.
198 (2000) and Alharbi et al. (2018) included a letter-digit substitute task, assessing processing
199 speed and WM capacity (Van der Elst et al., 2012). While the former did not find any effect
200 of habitual caffeine consumption, the latter found that a single dose of caffeine from a
201 specific type of coffee, *café arabica* (Qahwa), a traditional Arabic and Middle Eastern coffee
202 made from raw or lightly roasted beans and cardamom improved performance. Loke (1988)
203 and Lanini et al. (2016) used procedures involving mental operations (addition, subtraction,
204 multiplication), which involves rapid information processing, retention, and manipulating
205 mental representations (Imbo et al., 2018). In Loke (1988), ingesting 200 mg caffeine
206 capsules improved performance in selected mental operations compared with placebo or 400

207 mg caffeine capsules, whereas Lanini et al. (2016) reported no effects of ingesting a
208 personally preferred amount of caffeine.

209 **Summary.** There is limited evidence for the effect of caffeine on aspects of WM, other than
210 improved RTs. However, the improved performance on psychomotor vigilance and RT tasks
211 implies that caffeine can improve overt attentional control in WM, such as facilitating faster
212 initiation of the already prepared response. Regardless of dose or the form of administration,
213 caffeine is unlikely to influence other WM processes, such as information maintenance and
214 manipulation, especially in complex tasks where multiple WM processes are involved.

215 **1.2. Short Term Memory (STM)**

216 Here we distinguished WM from short term memory (STM), which can be viewed as a
217 “passive” information repository involving short-term maintenance and recounting
218 (Unsworth and Engle, 2007). The verbal learning task (VLT), including both immediate
219 recall and recognition memory tests, and the memory scanning task, are widely used
220 procedure across the reviewed studies as STM measures. In VLT, to-be-remembered words
221 are presented in visual or auditory form. Hamelers et al. (2000) did not find an association
222 between habitual caffeine consumption and immediate recall in VLT. In contrast, based on
223 self-reported habitual caffeine consumption, Loke (1988) categorised participants into three
224 groups: *low* users (< 387.5 mg/week); *moderate* users (387.5 – 927.5 mg/week); and *high*
225 users (> 927.5 mg/week). Participants were also given 200 mg caffeine capsules and
226 completed a recall task immediately, 15 min, and 50 min after treatment. Low users recalled
227 fewer words relative to moderate and high users at 15 min posttreatment, however, this study
228 did not find the effect of a single dose of caffeine administered in these habitual users.

229 Erikson et al. (1985) and Arnold et al. (1987) used similar procedures to examine the
230 effect of 0, 2, or 4 mg/kg bodyweight caffeine dissolved in a sports drink on immediate
231 recall. Arnold et al. (1987) found improvements in male participants under either 0 or 4 mg
232 dose at fast presentation, as well as in female participants under either 2 or 4 mg dose at the
233 third level of practice. Ryan et al. (2002) showed that a cup of regular coffee (estimated
234 caffeine 220 to 270 mg), but not decaffeinated coffee (estimated caffeine 5 to 10 mg)
235 improved in immediate recall in older adults (> 65 years). In contrast, Erikson et al. (1985)
236 showed that recall was unaffected in male participants, but impaired in female participants at
237 2 or 4 mg. A standard dose of 100 mg caffeine added in sports drink was also shown to
238 reduce overall retention in immediate recall and recall after an interfering list was presented,

239 compared with placebo (Terry and Phifer, 1986). In line with Erikson et al. (1985), several
240 other studies did not find any effect of caffeine on immediate recall, regardless of the number
241 of trials or lists (Smith et al., 1992), or the dose of caffeine (Walters and Lesk, 2016, 2015).

242 Only a few studies assessed recognition STM; among these, consuming 100 mg
243 caffeine added to decaffeinated coffee did not affect performance in either immediate recall
244 or memory scanning as an STM recognition task (Schmitt et al., 2003). Alharbi et al. (2018)
245 reported a tendency for a selected type of coffee in improving accuracy in picture recognition
246 (*arabica*) relative to placebo, but this did not reach statistical significance. Other studies
247 adopting STM measures reported an interaction between caffeine and age-related factors, and
248 are described further in section 4.2.

249 **Summary.** While a few studies identified the effect of caffeine on STM measures, others
250 found no reliable evidence that caffeine affects STM measures, irrespective of presentation
251 modality. Where effects were found, there is a lack of clarity in the direction of the effect as
252 studies reported both enhanced and impaired memory outcomes. Here task procedures were
253 relatively consistent, and the effect of caffeine does not seem to depend on the type of STM
254 assessment but possibly the caffeine administration process or other demographic
255 characteristics.

256 1.3. Long Term Memory (LTM)

257 Long-term memory (LTM) differs from STM and WM in duration and capacity: information
258 stored in LTM is not susceptible to time-based decay, and the LTM storage is not capacity-
259 limited (Cowan, 2008). Thus, LTM is assumed to store a vast amount of stabilised
260 information for an unlimited period. In Jarvis (1993) and Hameleers et al. (2000), the LTM
261 measures include delayed VLT and verbal fluency, a semantic memory task (Shao et al.,
262 2014). The length of retention interval ranged from “a few minutes” to 20 min. Both studies
263 reported a positive relationship between habitual consumption and performance in these LTM
264 measures. However, Lesk et al. (2009) reported a negative effect of CCFS use on
265 performance in paired associative learning (PAL) tasks and the general naming task (GNT).
266 PAL requires learning the association between unique, unfamiliar patterns and their locations
267 in a display of six boxes, thereby assessing visuospatial associative memory (Barnett et al.,
268 2016). GNT asks participants to name black-and-white outline drawings of objects graded for
269 familiarity as fast as possible, thereby assessing semantic memory (McKenna and
270 Warrington, 1980). Subsequent studies examining the effect of 200 mg caffeine on the same

271 measures showed performance decline in GNT, but not PAL (Walters and Lesk, 2016, 2015).
272 Studies using administered caffeine found limited or no effect of caffeine on delayed VLT
273 recall, recognition, or verbal fluency, regardless of the type of stimuli (words, pictures),
274 length of retention interval (20 min to 48 hours), or the dose of caffeine (Haskell-Ramsay et
275 al., 2018; Herz, 1999; Hogervorst et al., 1998; Lanini et al., 2016; Schmitt et al., 2003).

276 Two studies reported the negative effect of caffeine on LTM outcomes. Terry and
277 Phifer (1986) demonstrated that 100 mg dissolved in a sports drink impaired delayed recall.
278 Furthermore, the group who received caffeine also showed a trend for increased intrusion
279 errors. Additionally, on a list of 15 items, those who received caffeine had a poorer recall for
280 words at serial position 5 to 14 and showed a weak relationship for maintaining item order.
281 The researchers suggested that the group receiving caffeine forget more words at recency
282 positions and recalled less strategically compared to the placebo group. Mednick et al. (2008)
283 demonstrated that compared with a placebo and a nap group, the group that received a 200
284 mg caffeine pill had significantly impaired recall but not recognition at 20 min, despite
285 reporting themselves as feeling more alert. At seven hours delay, the nap group outperformed
286 the other two groups in both recall and recognition.

287 A few studies reported an LTM facilitating effect of caffeine. Smith et al. (1992)
288 showed that tablets containing 4 mg/kg bodyweight of caffeine added to decaffeinated coffee
289 improved performance in logical reasoning (Baddeley, 1968) and semantic processing
290 (Baddeley, 1981) when tested in the morning or a few hours after lunch, relative to control.
291 However, no group difference in delayed recognition was observed. Loke (1988) noted an
292 inverted U-shaped relationship between habitual intake and recall. Borota et al. (2014)
293 showed the consolidation-enhancing effect of 200 mg caffeine administered immediately
294 post-learning, reflected by the improved discrimination between old and new items in 24-
295 hour delayed recognition. However, Aust and Stahl (2020) failed to replicate the findings of
296 this study, suggesting that in Borota et al. (2014), likely the reversal of withdrawal symptoms
297 from caffeine abstinence escalated the positive treatment effect. Furthermore, similar to Herz
298 (1999), Borota et al. (2014) found no effect of caffeine on LTM when administered before
299 memory tests. Lastly, Ryan et al. (2002) reported a memory-enhancing effect of a regular cup
300 of drip coffee, compared with decaffeinated coffee, in both delayed recall and recognition.

301 **Summary.** There is no reliable effect of caffeine on LTM, and the effect was characterised by
302 either an LTM enhancing or impairing direction, depending on the type of tasks used and the

303 drug administration process. LTM tasks such as PAL or GNT may require the recruitment of
304 additional cognitive processes compared with delayed recall or recognition, thus evoking
305 more varied performance.

306 *1.3.1. Which memory stage does caffeine affect?*

307 The process of forming LTM can be divided into three stages: encoding, where selected
308 information is processed voluntarily and enters WM or STM; consolidation, where some
309 information is reorganised or rehearsed, and integrated into LTM; retrieval, where
310 information is retrieved spontaneously or through associative cues (Atkinson and Shiffrin,
311 1968; Broadbent, 1971; Waugh and Norman, 1965). Caffeine may likely play different roles
312 at these stages. We examined this topic from two aspects. First, where caffeine was
313 experimentally administered, drug administration can occur immediately before or after
314 learning, or the encoding phase; or immediately before the memory test, or retrieval phase.
315 Furthermore, when a longer retention interval was used (Borota et al., 2014; Mednick et al.,
316 2008), caffeine administered immediately after learning is likely to affect memory
317 consolidation. Here a “long” retention interval is only loosely defined as studies having
318 separate sessions for learning and delayed memory tests. Comparing results from studies
319 adopting these different procedures can help us understand which memory stage is affected.
320 Second, several studies using multiple recall trials reported serial position analyses, providing
321 further insights on how caffeine affects recall dynamics.

322 Most studies administered caffeine 15 min to an hour before the learning phase,
323 providing sufficient time for caffeine metabolise. In contrast, Borota et al. (2014) and Herz
324 (1999) examined caffeine administered after the learning phase. Herz (1999) found that 5
325 mg/kg bodyweight (participants’ mean weight was 71.6 kg) caffeine capsule administered
326 before retrieval (i.e., 48 hours after learning) did not affect LTM recall following a 48-hour
327 delay. Nevertheless, this finding does not rule out the possibility that caffeine did facilitate
328 memory encoding or consolidation, but the effect was negligible after the delay. Borota et al.
329 (2014) found that 200 mg caffeine immediately following incidental learning significantly
330 improved correct identification of similar lure items in a 24-hour delayed recognition
331 (Experiment 1). However, the same amount of caffeine administered one hour before the
332 memory test (24 hours after learning) did not affect performance (Experiment 2), replicating
333 Herz's (1999) results. These two experiments provide evidence that caffeine can facilitate
334 consolidation but not retrieval.

335 Terry and Phifer (1986) reported that 100 mg caffeine tablet dissolved in sports drink
336 moderated recall dynamics in three ways. First, participants recalled substantially fewer
337 words in the middle positions (positions 5 to 14, in a list of 15 items). Second, caffeine
338 substantially reduced the correlation between the recalled word positions and the presented
339 word positions ($r = -.01$) compared with control ($r = -.52$). The researchers elaborated that
340 high correlation is usually expected in free recall. Third, compared to the caffeine group, the
341 control group tended to recall more items from recency positions. These findings suggest that
342 caffeine impairs memory search during retrieval after a short delay.

343 On the contrary, Arnold et al. (1987) demonstrated that at higher caffeine dose (4 mg/
344 kg bodyweight, compared to 2 mg/kg bodyweight or the placebo control), participants
345 outputted words in later positions first, followed by words at primacy and middle positions.
346 They suggested that caffeine may especially strengthen STM and support encoding of recent
347 events at the cost of earlier events, thus, to compensate for this attention cost, participants
348 strategized recall by unloading recency items first and then shift their attention to output
349 items at other positions. This interpretation indicates that caffeine can affect encoding
350 through attention modulation, or retrieval through strategized recall. Note that Arnold et al.
351 (1987) is one of the few studies which reported the STM-enhancing effect of caffeine. The
352 researchers' interpretation cannot be extrapolated to other studies which did not find a
353 reliable effect of caffeine on STM. In line with this, Loke (1988) showed that both moderate
354 and high users recalled more difficult words at primacy positions compared to low users, and
355 moderate users also recalled more easy words at primacy positions, but fewer easy words at
356 recency positions than low users, suggesting that caffeine can also affect recall of items at
357 earlier serial positions.

358 **Summary.** There is some evidence that caffeine can affect memory encoding and
359 consolidation. Despite that caffeine may not directly affect retrieval, it can modulate the
360 focus of attention during memory search and recall output. The direction of this influence
361 remains unclear: while caffeine can impair item encoding at specific serial positions, this
362 process prompts strategized recall, which may improve overall retention.

363 **1.4. Other Memory Measures**

364 Soar et al. (2016) used JEF[®], a comprehensive executive assessment battery involving three
365 tests of action-based, event-based, and time-based prospective memory. They showed that 1.8
366 g of Nescafe[®] coffee granules (estimated 50 mg caffeine) dissolved in hot water improved

367 performance in all three sub-categories of the memory task compared to the placebo group
368 who received decaffeinated coffee. Additionally, Lesk and Womble (2004) examined the
369 effect of a 200 mg caffeine tablet on tip-of-tongue as an implicit memory measure. The group
370 receiving caffeine showed a larger phonological priming effect compared to the placebo
371 group by demonstrating decreased tip-of-tongue on the related list and blocking interference
372 produced by the unrelated list.

373 **Summary.** When prospective or implicit memory measures are used, the administration of a
374 small amount of caffeine shows a promising facilitating effect. Prospective memory and
375 implicit memory can add ecological validity and clinical applications to the aforementioned
376 LTM measures. For example, the tip-of-tongue effect can reflect retrieval from both STM
377 and LTM. More studies are needed to determine the reliability and dose effect.

378 **2. Drug Factors**

379 **2.1. Is there a dose-response relationship between caffeine and memory?**

380 Three studies reported dose-response associations between habitual caffeine intake and
381 memory outcomes (Hameleers et al., 2000; Jarvis, 1993; Loke, 1988). Among these, two
382 reported a linear relationship of better memory performance in higher habitual consumers
383 (Hameleers et al., 2000; Jarvis, 1993). On the other hand, Loke (1988) found that moderate
384 users outperformed the high and low users in the problem solving WM task and delayed
385 recall, implying an inverted U relationship between habitual consumption and memory.
386 Borota et al. (2014, Experiment 3) showed performance increment in the delayed recognition
387 memory task at both 200 mg and 300 mg caffeine dose, compared with the placebo and 100
388 mg dose groups, suggesting that the optimal dose is a minimum of 200 mg.

389 Several other studies also implied a dose-response relationship via other moderators.
390 Terry and Phifer (1986) found a correlation between trait anxiety and recall. Although this
391 factor did not interact with the effect of caffeine, they mentioned that participants probably
392 already experienced situational anxiety, hence “...*the additional arousal from the caffeine*
393 *probably exceed the optimal level beneficial to performance*” (p. 862). This implies that the
394 effect of caffeine on memory is moderated by trait anxiety and arousal levels, and this effect
395 is characterised by an inverted U shape. Similarly, Lanini et al. (2016) reported no effect of a
396 personally preferred amount of caffeine on memory, but improved RTs in the psychomotor
397 vigilance, executive function assessment (Random Number Generation task) (Towse and

398 Neil, 1998), and metacognition (subjective ratings of perceived performance on a Visual
399 Analogue Scale). The researchers argued that a dose-response is likely to exist when the
400 administered dose exceeds the dose individual habitually consumes, and the direction of this
401 relationship depends on task-specific memory processes.

402 Erikson et al. (1985) and Arnold et al. (1987) both reported a more complex dose-
403 response relationship. Erikson et al. (1985) reported an interaction between dose and stimuli
404 presentation speed in female participants only: while no caffeine effect was observed in fast
405 presentation, the increment of recall under slow presentation was the lowest in the 2 mg
406 (19%), followed by 4 mg (22%), and highest at 0 mg (33%) dose. When participants were
407 then divided into high (> 150 mg daily) and low users (< 150 mg daily) based on habitual
408 consumption, low users recalled more than high users, but the correlation between habitual
409 consumption and recall was not significant. These results led Erikson et al. (1985) to
410 conclude a negative linear relationship between caffeine and recall, further moderated by sex
411 and encoding duration. Arnold et al. (1987) demonstrated that male participants recalled more
412 under 0 mg and 4 mg relative to under 2 mg dose in slow presentation condition, they also
413 recalled more under 4 mg relative to under the other two doses in fast presentation condition.
414 Whereas female participants recalled more under 2 and 4 mg conditions than under control in
415 the third practice only. The researchers suggested that these results point to a positive linear
416 relationship between caffeine consumption and memory outcomes.

417 **Summary.** There is no evidence for a reliable dose-response relationship between caffeine
418 consumption and memory outcomes. Where a dose-response association is implied, the
419 direction of the relationship can be both positive or negative. Studies using self-report
420 approach are more likely to report a positive dose-response, suggesting a possible placebo
421 effect of daily caffeine consumption in personally preferred drinks. Studies reporting indirect
422 dose-response relationships with additional moderating factors are harder to interpret. Likely
423 dose-response can be observed under specific task conditions, or that there is no dose-
424 response relationship once these task conditions are removed.

425 **2.2. Are all caffeine sources equal?**

426 Caffeine is ubiquitous in a variety of food items such as coffee, tea, coke, sports drinks, and
427 chocolate (Carman et al., 2014). Different sources of caffeine may have specific drug
428 properties mediating metabolic efficiency (Choi and Curhan, 2007). This is because i) food
429 items containing naturally occurring caffeine may also consist of other components which

430 can affect memory outcomes with regular consumption. For example, there is established
431 evidence that the specific type and amount of polyphenols and ascorbic acids presented in
432 tea, but not coffee, has a greater observable neuroprotective effect (Noguchi-Shinohara et al.,
433 2014); ii) when comparing the same type of caffeine-containing foodstuff such as coffee,
434 caffeine contents can differ by the grinding and brewing processes used (Bell et al., 1996;
435 McCusker et al., 2003). These raised the question of whether caffeine from different sources
436 can have different effects on memory.

437 In studies measuring habitual caffeine intake, participants reported the source of
438 consumption by responding to a single question asking how many cups of “coffee” or “tea”
439 do they usually drink in a day (Hameleers et al., 2000; Jarvis, 1993; Lesk et al., 2009; Loke,
440 1988). Jarvis (1993) computed average intake by assigning weights of 1.0 to coffee and 0.5 to
441 tea. A dose-response relationship was observed between coffee consumption and
442 performance in all cognitive tasks, but an association between tea and performance in only
443 two tasks (SRT and visuospatial reasoning). Hameleers et al. (2000) assigned weights of 0.85
444 to coffee and 0.35 to tea based on the industrial standards of 85 mg and 30 mg caffeine in a
445 cup of coffee and tea, respectively. Such estimation is likely unrepresentative of the actual
446 caffeine content. For example, a cup of freshly brewed coffee may contain a higher amount
447 of caffeine than a cup of blended instant coffee. In both studies, the effect of other caffeine-
448 containing food was not accounted for. Loke (1988) reported a significant effect of habitual
449 consumption, but not a single dose of experimentally administered caffeine capsule, on recall.
450 The screening process for habitual consumption was not reported in this study, thus
451 participants may ambiguously report caffeine intake from a variety of food items. The
452 findings also raised the question of caffeine tolerance. Chronic caffeine use causes increased
453 caffeine tolerance (Addicott et al., 2009; Evans and Griffiths, 1992; Shi et al., 1993), thus a
454 standard dose assigned by the experimenter may not have observable effects due to inter-
455 individual differences in tolerance.

456 Caffeine from the same beverage, coffee, can also have different effects due to the
457 stage of beans, brewing process, and biochemistry profiles (Alharbi et al., 2018). In this
458 study, participants receiving a cup of 3.02 g coffee arabica and 2.04 g ground cardamom
459 showed performance increment in all memory tests, compared to those receiving a cup of 12
460 g ‘2 in 1 City Café’ instant coffee (robusta) (with an optional 4.6 g sugar sachet). Coffee
461 arabica also increased ratings on clear-headedness and decreased ratings on sleepiness
462 compared to control and the group receiving robusta. In comparison, coffee robusta only

463 improved performance in one task (Trail making set B). However, the robusta group was
464 given highly processed instant coffee which may also contain a high amount of noncoffee
465 ingredients. The arabica group was given fresh ground coffee and cardamom, which was used
466 to enhance the flavour but can also independently enhance learning and memory (Abu-
467 Taweel, 2018). The researchers did not report the estimated caffeine contents in these two
468 types of coffee, but likely that these beans differed in caffeine contents. Taken together, this
469 study suggests the treatment effect of caffeine can be mediated by the source of caffeine,
470 either due to the quantity of the caffeine content, or other presenting bioactive ingredients.

471 In laboratory settings, caffeine is typically administered via oral capsules and pills;
472 tablets dissolved in sports drink, water, or decaffeinated coffee; or regular commercially
473 accessible coffee. These procedures involve minimal costs or risks for participants and easy
474 to include a placebo-controlled condition, but limit the analysis of caffeine effects derived
475 from other food sources. Furthermore, coffee craving can impair performance in cued recall
476 and recognition memory (Palmer et al., 2017). This suggests that regular coffee consumers
477 may underperform in memory tasks if they were only given a capsule or tablets (odourless)
478 dissolved in a cup of water after a prolonged caffeine fasting, as they have been deprived of
479 the sensory experiences (i.e., the sight of a familiar café, smell, or taste) of their regular
480 coffee. As most studies reported a required period of caffeine, food, or other substances
481 fasting, reversal withdrawal can inflate the treatment effects (Aust and Stahl, 2020). This
482 effect can be further inflated in habitual consumers who received regular coffee, than those
483 receiving caffeinated capsules or pills. Regular consumers should also be able to distinguish
484 between regular and decaffeinated coffee due to the subtle differences in texture and taste.
485 Nonregular consumers should be able to distinguish between caffeine and placebo due to the
486 larger magnitude of caffeine-induced physical symptoms in low tolerant users (Shirlow and
487 Mathers, 1985). Additionally, consuming different types of caffeine-containing beverages is
488 mapped by geographical, historical, and cultural characteristics (Grigg, 2002). Participants
489 receiving coffee (or caffeine added to decaffeinated coffee) treatment would not experience
490 the effect of caffeine if they prefer to obtain their daily dose of caffeine from other types of
491 beverages.

492 **Summary.** Caffeine from different sources may contain other bioactive ingredients that
493 independently affect cognitive functioning and performance in memory tasks. Most studies
494 did not control for confounding factors such as caffeine metabolism, caffeine intake from

495 other food sources, consumption habits, and baseline tolerance, warranting more research to
496 compare the effect of caffeine from different sources.

497 **3. Experimental Factors**

498 Most studies included prescreening or other controlled processes to ensure the effectiveness
499 of drug administration. These include using well defined exclusion criteria, fasting,
500 controlling for the diurnal cycle (e.g., sleep scheduling, restricting testing time), and
501 specifying absorption time. As nicotine interferes with caffeine absorption (Nehlig, 2018;
502 Snel and Lorist, 2013), most studies included prescreening for a history of smoking. Others
503 used prescreening to exclude participants with health conditions that can be affected by the
504 use of caffeine or other stimulants, such as neuropsychiatric, kidney, or cardiovascular
505 problems, pregnancy, and female participants taking oral contraceptives. Ten studies
506 screened participants for physical measures (Arnold et al., 1987; Baur et al., 2021; Erikson et
507 al., 1985; Hogervorst et al., 1998; Jarvis, 1993; Koppelstaetter et al., 2008; Lanini et al.,
508 2016; Lesk et al., 2009; Smith et al., 1992b; Soar et al., 2016). Among these, blood pressure
509 and heart rate are most commonly screened. Additional measures include pupil diameter and
510 blood samples for fasting glucose and insulin (Lanini et al., 2016), pulse oximetry
511 (Koppelstaetter et al., 2008), and polymorphism of the gene ADORA2A through saliva
512 samples (Baur et al., 2021). Studies recruiting older adults also included more rigorous
513 cognitive prescreening, such as driving ability (Haskell-Ramsay et al., 2018), clinical
514 diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment (Haller et al., 2017), and MMSE (Haller et al., 2017;
515 Lesk et al., 2009; Walters and Lesk, 2016, 2015).

516 To ensure caffeine absorption, all but three (Borota et al., 2014; Smith et al., 1992;
517 Ueda and Nakao, 2019) mentioned the requirements for pretreatment fasting. Caffeine fasting
518 is not explicitly reported in Borota et al. (2014), however, a subsequent replication study
519 (Aust and Stahl, 2020) elaborated a fasting procedure, implying that this has been required in
520 Borota et al. (2014). Though Terry and Phifer (1986) and Klaassen et al. (2013) did not
521 mention fasting requirements, participants completed a questionnaire detailing their food and
522 beverage before the experiment, and data was removed for those who reported having
523 consumed caffeinated food items two hours before the experiment. The type of fasting ranged
524 from caffeine or CCFS (Erikson et al., 1985; Haller et al., 2017; Soar et al., 2016), to alcohol,
525 OTC medications, and general beverage and food fasting (Alharbi et al., 2018; Arnold et al.,
526 1987; Baur et al., 2021; Haskell-Ramsay et al., 2018; Herz, 1999; Hogervorst et al., 1998;

527 Koppelstaetter et al., 2008; Lanini et al., 2016; Lesk and Womble, 2004; Loke, 1988;
528 Mednick et al., 2008; Ryan et al., 2002; Schmitt et al., 2003; Trunk et al., 2015; Walters and
529 Lesk, 2016, 2015). The time of the required caffeine fasting ranged from two (Soar et al.,
530 2016) to 24 hours (Alharbi et al., 2018; Haskell-Ramsay et al., 2018; Loke, 1988; Mednick et
531 al., 2008). One study investigating sleep deprivation adopted a more rigorous pre-
532 experimental protocol restricting participants' naps, caffeine, alcohol, and medication intake,
533 as these were known factors to interfere with sleep (Baur et al., 2021). According to Borota's
534 et al. (2014) assessments on salivary caffeine metabolites, a dose of up to 300 mg (amount to
535 1.5 cups of regular coffee) caffeine can be fully washed out after 24 hours. Nevertheless, due
536 to the variations in source intake and individual metabolism, whether a short period of
537 caffeine fasting (2 to 4 hours) can reset the absorption rate is less clear (Kalow, 1985; Nehlig,
538 2018). As diet, alcohol and OTC medications also affect caffeine absorption and metabolism,
539 future studies may benefit from stricter fasting protocols (Nehlig, 2018). Conversely, Aust
540 and Stahl (2020) warned against pretreatment fasting, as the reversal of withdrawal
541 symptoms can be mistakenly taken as the treatment effect. Future studies using habitual
542 caffeine consumer samples and fasting procedures may benefit from measuring the
543 withdrawal symptoms at baseline and posttreatment. A better approach is to use alternating
544 phases of caffeine treatment and abstinence: participants are given a standard amount of
545 caffeine three times daily over several consecutive days to establish habitual consumption
546 and tolerance, followed by the last day, during which they receive either the same amount of
547 caffeine or a placebo (James, 1998). This protocol can effectively control for tolerance and
548 withdrawal associated with habitual consumption, allowing for disaggregation of the acute (
549 performance on the last day) and long-term effects (performance across previous days).

550 All but three studies (Trunk et al., 2015; Walters and Lesk, 2016, 2015) reported
551 using an absorption period of 15 (Loke, 1988) to 60 min (Alharbi et al., 2018; Borota et al.,
552 2014; Mednick et al., 2008), with 30 min being the most prevalent (Arnold et al., 1987;
553 Erikson et al., 1985; Haller et al., 2017; Haskell-Ramsay et al., 2018; Hogervorst et al., 1998;
554 Lanini et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2002; Schmitt et al., 2003). An exception is Klaassen et al.
555 (2013), who reported that the functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanning
556 session began 10 min after caffeine administration, however, considering the procedures
557 involved in fMRI data collection, likely the actual absorption was longer before task
558 exposure. All of these studies administrated caffeine through oral ingestion, the chosen
559 absorption time is validated by caffeine pharmacokinetics data suggesting that peak

560 concentration is usually reached between 15 to 120 min after intake (Fredholm et al., 1999).
561 However, few justified the use of a particular absorption period, except Ueda and Nakao
562 (2019) who administered caffeine through transpulmonary inhalation, they clarified that this
563 method ensures peak plasma caffeine be reached within seconds, hence tests were
564 administered immediately after the drug treatment. Saliva sampling is a reliable, non-invasive
565 method for frequent measurement of caffeine pharmacokinetics (Newton et al., 1981; Suzuki
566 et al., 1989), albeit only a few reported collecting participants' salivary samples (Baur et al.,
567 2021; Borota et al., 2014; Haskell-Ramsay et al., 2018; Hogervorst et al., 1998; Klaassen et
568 al., 2013; Trunk et al., 2015). Among these, Trunk et al. (2015) mentioned the procedure of
569 salivary sample collection but did not report this data in further detail. Haskell-Ramsay et al.
570 (2018) and Hogervorst et al. (1998) compared salivary caffeine concentrate before and after
571 the experiment (75 to 110 min posttreatment) and excluded data from participants who did
572 not adhere to the caffeine fasting instruction. Both studies also demonstrated higher post-
573 experiment caffeine concentration in the treatment compared to the placebo control group.
574 Klaassen et al. (2013) compared concentration at baseline, 25, and 90 min after
575 administration, and found greater concentration in the treatment group at 25 min, and
576 marginally higher concentration at 90 min compared to the placebo group. This finding is in
577 line with Borota et al. (2014), who compared salivary caffeine metabolites at the baseline,
578 one, three, and 24 hours after treatment, and found the peak concentration at around one hour
579 window, which gradually declines and was fully metabolised at 24 hours. However, Baur et
580 al. (2021) reported that caffeine metabolites levels continued to increase after regular daily
581 doses until the fourth day, and gradually decreased after the termination of caffeine
582 administration.

583 Controlling for sleeping schedules and time of testing can help regulate overall
584 arousal and alertness, which can affect both caffeine absorption and memory outcomes
585 (Nehlig, 2018). Some studies reported a requirement of "a normal night of sleep" before the
586 experiment (Alharbi et al., 2018; Lanini et al., 2016; Loke, 1988), while others reported a
587 minimum of five (Arnold et al., 1987; Baur et al., 2021; Erikson et al., 1985) to eight
588 (Mednick et al., 2008) hours of sleep. Four studies measured participants' sleepiness in the
589 Karolinska Sleepiness Scale (Alharbi et al., 2018; Baur et al., 2021; Klaassen et al., 2013;
590 Mednick et al., 2008), whereas others mostly included measurements of mood states,
591 including levels of alertness and arousal. Additionally, Smith et al. (1992) mentioned that the
592 placebo and treatment groups did not differ in their lengths of sleep the night before the

593 experiment. The remaining studies did not report a minimum required amount of sleep nor
594 compared the sleep schedule between the treatment and placebo groups at baseline. In
595 particular, participants' sleep schedules have not been reported in studies examining the
596 interaction between caffeine and the time-of-day effect (Ryan et al., 2002; Walters and Lesk,
597 2016, 2015). However, these studies did specify the restricted testing window or the use of
598 the same testing time if participants returned for a second session. The use of a restricted
599 testing window has been reported in all the reviewed studies.

600 **Summary.** Most studies elaborated the experimental control for confounding factors, such as
601 health conditions, physiological state, fasting, and diurnal cycles. However, sleep schedules
602 have not been consistently examined. Fasting schedules used by different studies are largely
603 inconsistent, with little justifications on the type and time of fasting. Possible inflation of
604 treatment effect from the reversal of caffeine withdrawal symptoms has not been discussed in
605 these studies. Where appropriate, future studies may benefit from including pre-experimental
606 food and sleep diaries.

607 **4. Demographic Factors**

608 **4.1. Are caffeine effects on memory different in males and females?**

609 The effects of caffeine were exclusively observed in female participants in Erikson et al.
610 (1985). Arnold et al. (1987) hypothesised that the caffeine effect is mediated by sex
611 hormones (Sisti et al., 2015), they subsequently recruited females who were within the first
612 five days of their menstruation cycle and found that recall in female participants benefited
613 more from caffeine compared to male participants. A similar performance-enhancing effect
614 of caffeine in female participants was observed in Smith et al. (1992), who found that 4
615 mg/kg bodyweight of caffeine tablets added in decaffeinated coffee improved female
616 participants' performance in a sustained attention task, but impaired male participants'
617 performance. Despite the evidence that the effect of hormonal fluctuation on caffeine
618 metabolism is dose-related (Sisti et al., 2015), a dose-response relationship between caffeine
619 and sex is often not examined.

620 Haskell-Ramsay et al. (2018) reported a significant interaction between sex and
621 caffeine in LTM but provided no further details. They also found higher ratings of jitteriness
622 in younger females compared to the same age placebo group and older males in either
623 caffeine or placebo groups, and significantly lower ratings of jitteriness in decaffeinated

624 groups in older males. They proposed several sex-related factors, including sex-steroid levels
625 (Ascherio et al., 2004; Ferrini and Barrett-Connor, 1996), haemodynamic mechanisms
626 (Hartley et al., 2004), uric acid responses (Kiyohara et al., 1999; Perna et al., 2016), and
627 genetic polymorphisms (Rasmussen et al., 2002) which can modulate caffeine metabolism.
628 Particularly relevant to this study is the finding that females were more susceptible to the
629 anxiogenic effects of caffeine under the same dose than males (Domschke et al., 2012;
630 Gajewska et al., 2013). In comparison, a study examining the resting functional connectivity
631 between habitual and non-coffee drinkers found an association between the increased
632 frequency of caffeine consumption and anxiety in males only (Magalhães et al., 2021).
633 However, this study did not assess participants' memory nor provide further explanations for
634 this sex difference.

635 Loke (1988) and Herz (1999) failed to find any main or interaction effect of sex in
636 memory tasks. Noteworthy is a number of studies that recruited only males (Klaassen et al.,
637 2013; Koppelstaetter et al., 2008; Lanini et al., 2016; Ueda and Nakao, 2019), and one that
638 recruited only females (Alharbi et al., 2018). Most of these studies did not justify the
639 rationale for males or females only recruitment, except Lanini et al. (2016), who mentioned
640 that females were excluded due to “changes in caffeine metabolism during menstrual cycling
641 and contraceptive steroid use.” (p. 31).

642 **Summary.** Given the underlying physiological mechanisms, caffeine is likely to affect
643 memory differently in males and females through metabolic pathways, although this is not
644 fully evident in the studies which examined sex and caffeine interaction. Female participants
645 are likely to benefit more from an acute dose of caffeine than their male counterparts, but
646 they are also likely to experience higher levels of physical side effects of caffeine. On the
647 other hand, recruitment of only males or females indicates that researchers might have
648 already anticipated some sex-related differences in the caffeine effect. Future studies should
649 also examine how female participants' hormonal fluctuations may synchronise with the
650 effects of caffeine on memory.

651 **4.2. Does ageing interact with caffeine to influence memory?**

652 Where the long-term consequence of habitual caffeine consumption was examined, Jarvis
653 (1993) reported a greater memory-enhancing effect of caffeine in older adults (55 years and
654 older) compared to younger adults. In contrast, Lesk et al. (2009) found the detrimental effect
655 of consuming CCFS on LTM, but not WM tasks in older adults (67 years and older).

656 Hameleers et al. (2000) reported no interaction between habitual caffeine consumption and
657 age (from 24 to 81 years) in memory outcomes. These disparities may be due to
658 methodological differences. In Jarvis (1993) the cut-off age for older adults were loosely
659 defined and group performance might be inflated by the relatively younger participants in the
660 older adult age group (i.e., the researchers grouped all participants aged 55 years and older).
661 In Lesk et al. (2009), participants who consumed CCFS might also have other foods which
662 simultaneously altered their cognitive performance (Feldman and Barshi, 2007).

663 Walters and Lesk (2016, 2015) re-examined the impact of 200 mg administered
664 caffeine in a group of older adults (> 60 years) using the same set of cognitive measures as
665 Lesk et al. (2009). Both found caffeine, compared to placebo, worsened performance in WM,
666 LTM, and the processing speed tasks as the time-of-day effect increases. In contrast, Ryan et
667 al. (2002) found that a cup of regular drip coffee compared to a decaffeinated coffee could
668 ameliorate performance decline caused by time-of-day in older adults (> 65 years).
669 Hogervorst et al. (1998) reported an interaction between different age groups and a dose of
670 225 mg caffeine (a total of three cups of coffee received within 15 min), whereby the middle-
671 aged adults (46 to 54 years) showed performance increments in both STM and LTM tasks,
672 and younger adults (26 to 34 years) showed RTs slowing in the STM task, but no effect of
673 caffeine on older adults (66 to 74 years). However, analysis of salivary caffeine metabolites
674 also revealed that the middle age group had higher levels of pretreatment caffeine
675 concentration, indicating that they failed to adhere to the required caffeine fasting. This group
676 also reported higher levels of habitual consumption compared to the other two age groups,
677 indicating a possible larger placebo effect. Lastly, two studies did not find any effects of 100
678 mg caffeine added in decaffeinated coffee in different age groups (Haskell-Ramsay et al.,
679 2018; Schmitt et al., 2003).

680 **Summary.** There is adequate evidence that the treatment effect of caffeine manifests
681 differently in different age groups. Older adults may be more sensitive to the effect of
682 caffeine than younger or middle age adults. Furthermore, in older adults, caffeine can interact
683 with the time-of-day effect to facilitate or impair memory performance. There is room for
684 future studies to compare the caffeine effect in different age groups.

685 5. How Effective is Caffeine as A Memory Enhancer?

686 Cognitive resources are defined as a limited quantity enabling cognitive functions and
687 processes (Oberauer et al., 2016; Shenhav et al., 2017). In this view, memory is a resource-
688 limited process (Anderson et al., 1996; Barrouillet et al., 2004; Bjork and Bjork, 2009;
689 Borragán et al., 2017; Just and Carpenter, 1992; Logie, 2011; Ma et al., 2014; Popov et al.,
690 2019; Vergauwe and Cowan, 2015). This resource limit can occur during encoding, such as
691 when the amount of processing resource cannot cope with task demand (Camos and Portrat,
692 2015); consolidation, such as when multiple representations are competing for storage
693 resources (McFarlane and Humphreys, 2012; Zhang and Luck, 2008); or retrieval, such as
694 when previously retrieved information interferes with the ongoing retrieval process (Wixted
695 and Rohrer, 1993). In all these examples, the amount of available cognitive resources can
696 determine if information can be remembered.

697 Some studies have analogised cognitive resources to muscle strength, which depletes
698 with sustained use and recovers over time (Popov and Reder, 2020). As muscle strength,
699 stamina, and repair can be promoted by diet or exercise (Maughan, 2002), the amount and
700 availability of cognitive resources may also be enhanced through behavioural or
701 pharmacological interventions (Popov et al., 2019; Popov and Reder, 2020). Existing
702 evidence suggests that in healthy adults, sleeping, physical activities, noninvasive brain
703 stimulation, and nootropics can be applied to boost global cognitive functions (Boggio et al.,
704 2009; Manenti et al., 2013). To the best of our knowledge, the efficacy of these resource
705 enhancing approaches in influencing memory processes has not been compared. Among
706 different types of nootropics, caffeine is an adenosine receptor antagonist associated with
707 acute improvement in vigilance and motor reaction times (Nehlig, 2010, 1999) and has been
708 widely used as a cognitive enhancer (Hameleers et al., 2000; Jarvis, 1993; Madan, 2014;
709 Nehlig, 2010). Here we compare the effects of caffeine with other cognitive enhancement
710 approaches, including breakfast and nap.

711 Regular breakfast intake is associated with improved learning and memory outcomes
712 (Galioto and Spitznagel, 2016). In typical Western societies, adults also have a regular cup of
713 caffeinated drink during breakfast, raising the question of whether the cognitive enhancing
714 effect of breakfast was due to glucose intake or caffeine. According to Maridakis et al.
715 (2009), a dose of 100 mg or 200 mg caffeine capsule improved performance in tasks
716 involving psychomotor vigilance and sustained attention, which was comparable to the effect

717 of breakfast. Moreover, the treatment effect of 200 mg caffeine on psychomotor tasks was
718 independent of carbohydrate intake (Maridakis et al., 2009). However, memory outcomes
719 were not examined in these studies. Similarly, Lanini et al. (2016) found that a personally
720 preferred caffeine amount delivered via oral capsules improved performance in psychomotor
721 vigilance tasks and metacognition, but not in memory tasks. These effects were independent
722 of breakfast. In contrast, Smith et al. (1992) found a memory-enhancing effect of caffeine in
723 selected WM and LTM tasks, while breakfast had either no effect or impaired performance in
724 selected LTM tasks. The WM enhancing effect of caffeine relative to placebo carried over to
725 the second round of testing after participants were provided with a portion controlled lunch.
726 Furthermore, both Maridakis et al. (2009) and Smith et al. (1992) reported a mood enhancing
727 effect of caffeine, whereas, in Smith et al. (1992), participants who received breakfast
728 reported being more tranquil and calm only when they also received caffeine rather than
729 placebo.

730 Given the established role of caffeine in modulating arousal and sleepiness, its
731 treatment effect on memory outcomes may be indirectly attributed to these factors. This has
732 been demonstrated in studies that measured participants' mood, arousal, and sleepiness. For
733 example, Alharbi et al. (2018) showed that coffee robusta compared to arabica did not
734 improve ratings on clear-headedness or sleepiness, in keeping with the finding that only
735 arabica but not robusta improved performance in WM and STM measures. Mednick et al.
736 (2008) found that although participants receiving caffeine reported higher levels of alertness,
737 there is a detrimental effect of a 200 mg caffeine pill on delayed recall relative to placebo or
738 napping, after either a short (20 min) or long (7 hours) retention interval. Thus, sleep may be
739 more effective than caffeine in elevating memory resources independent of state arousal and
740 alertness. Conversely, Baur et al. (2021) observed the effects of regular consumption over
741 five days in sleep-deprived young adults (20 to 40 years), and reported no differences in
742 subjective ratings of sleepiness between those receiving regular coffee and decaffeinated
743 coffee, except on the first day. Furthermore, the reported sleepiness remained high in the
744 regular coffee group even after the night of an eight-hour recovery sleep. This reflects the
745 short-lasting effect of an acute dose of caffeine in improving subjective sleepiness. This study
746 found that, compared to the decaffeinated group, regular daily caffeine consumption
747 prevented performance decline in several WM tasks in sleep-deprived participants,
748 suggesting that instead of an enhancer, regular consumption normalises WM deficits due to
749 sleep deprivation.

750 **Summary.** Compared with breakfast, caffeine demonstrated promising cognitive enhancing
751 effect, especially in tasks involving psychomotor and attentional control. There is some
752 evidence that this positive treatment effect of caffeine also applies to WM or STM tasks,
753 whereas the effect of breakfast is more unreliable. However, compared with sleep, an acute
754 dose of caffeine may have short-term detrimental effects on memory, independent of
755 participants' perceived arousal and alertness. While regular daily consumption overtime can
756 prevent WM decline associated with sleep disturbances, it does not restore subjective
757 sleepiness.

758 **6. Discussion**

759 **6.1. Summary of findings**

760 Caffeine is the most popular psychoactive drug used worldwide. However, its impact on
761 cognitive performance remains controversial. Here we exclusively examined the effect of
762 caffeine on performance in a wide range of memory tasks based on drug factors,
763 experimental factors, and demographic factors. As a nootropic, caffeine is related to the
764 enhancement of cognitive resources in memory processes. Therefore, we explored the effects
765 of caffeine in comparison with other common cognitive enhancement approaches, such as
766 glucose intake and sleeping.

767 There is substantial evidence of caffeine in improving RTs in tasks involving
768 psychomotor vigilance or overt attentional control. This may be due to the faster initiation of
769 already prepared responses. However, there is limited treatment effect of caffeine in WM
770 tasks involving information maintenance, updating, or manipulation of memory
771 representations. Caffeine also does not have a reliable, unidirectional effect on performance
772 in immediate or delayed recall and recognition tasks, but some positive effects on prospective
773 or implicit memory measures. The inconsistent effects may be due to the heterogeneous LTM
774 measures and drug administration procedures used, or treatment effects at different memory
775 stages. While pre-learning administration can directly moderate memory encoding, post-
776 learning administration can affect consolidation depending on the length of the retention
777 interval. There is no evidence that caffeine can affect retrieval administered post-learning.

778 The direction of caffeine's treatment effect may depend on drug factors and
779 administration processes. Despite the lack of a reliable dose-response relationship, likely
780 there is a minimum amount for the treatment effect to be observed. Furthermore, most studies

781 assumed a common metabolic process of caffeine ingested from different sources, albeit the
782 evidence that caffeine from various caffeine-containing foodstuffs can have different effects
783 on cognition (Alharbi et al., 2018; Choi and Curhan, 2007). In particular, habitual users may
784 experience the drug effect differently from their preferred caffeine-containing foodstuffs than
785 administered pills or tablets. Most required a pre-experimental caffeine fasting procedure,
786 which can lead to withdrawal effects detrimental to memory performance (Nehlig, 1999). The
787 extent to which the treatment effect was caused by the reversal of withdrawal effect has not
788 been examined (Aust and Stahl, 2020). Although all studies have reported a prescreening
789 procedure and included a placebo control group where possible, only a few collected salivary
790 samples to validate caffeine absorption across individuals.

791 There is extensive evidence that demographic characteristics such as sex and age can
792 mediate the treatment effect of caffeine on memory. Females compared to males may be
793 more sensitive to the physical effect of caffeine, such as reporting higher levels of jitteriness
794 or alertness, while also more likely to experience the memory-enhancing effect of caffeine.
795 However, more research examining the interaction between sex and caffeine effect in
796 memory outcomes is needed, particularly how the treatment effect interacts with female
797 participants' hormonal cycles. Additionally, older adults may also be more sensitive to the
798 treatment effects of caffeine or the interaction between caffeine and the time of day effect
799 than their younger counterparts. Where effects were found in older adults, caffeine can either
800 enhance or impair memory outcomes. Compared to younger adults, older adults may be
801 lifelong caffeine consumers having different metabolic profiles or having been exposed to
802 other lifestyle factors that can interact with caffeine in affecting memory.

803 Lastly, we examined the effectiveness of caffeine as a memory enhancer when
804 compared with glucose intake and sleep. There is some evidence that caffeine can benefit
805 performance more than breakfast, especially in tasks requiring psychomotor and attentional
806 control. Conversely, depending on participants' state arousal and alertness, caffeine can have
807 short term detrimental effect compared to a nap, which can benefit memory consolidation. On
808 the other hand, regular caffeine consumption over an extended period has working memory
809 normalising effects among sleep-deprived healthy young adults.

810 **6.2. Drug mechanisms**

811 Drug mechanisms of caffeine have been well established in animal models. Compared with
812 laboratory experiments using human participants, animals can be maintained under rigorously

813 controlled diets and restrictions to caffeine access, permitting experimental designs that can
814 potentially establish causality. Several animal studies have suggested that a single moderate
815 dose of caffeine (1–30 mg/kg or 3–10 mg/kg in 0, 1, 3, 10, 30, or 100 mg/kg) administered
816 immediately post-learning, or 30 min before testing improved the retention of inhibitory
817 avoidance (avoiding a footshock), but not habituation (decreased free exploration) in a new
818 environment; conversely, caffeine administered 30 min at the same dose before learning
819 impaired memory acquisition, possibly through interfering with attentional processes
820 (Angelucci et al., 1999). Similarly, a moderate dose of caffeine (0.3 – 10 mg/kg in 0, 0.3, 10,
821 or 30 mg/kg) administered immediately post-learning, or 30 min before testing improved
822 rats' memory retention and retrieval in the Morris water maze task, while pre-learning
823 administration did not alter performance during learning or testing (Angelucci et al., 2002).
824 These suggest that, in rats, caffeine directly participate in consolidation, but can only affect
825 encoding through interfering with the attentional processes. This is in line with the findings in
826 human studies described in section **1.3.1**, where a single dose of caffeine can affect both
827 encoding and consolidation, and the direction of this influence may depend on individual or
828 task specific factors. On the other hand, in these animal studies, the finding that pre-testing
829 (after the retention interval) administration improved memory retrieval indicates that caffeine
830 at a moderate dose may facilitate memory retrieval, which was not reported in human studies
831 (Borota et al., 2014; Herz, 1999).

832 Animal studies are particularly useful in providing insights into the therapeutic
833 potential of caffeine and its biomolecular mechanisms. In the animal model of Parkinson's
834 disease, a single dose of caffeine administered 45 min pre-learning could effectively reverse
835 the memory deficit in the rat model of Parkinson's disease, suggesting that caffeine may
836 affect learning and memory through the interaction between dopamine and adenosine systems
837 (Gevaerd et al., 2001). Habitual caffeine use is associated with several other pathways
838 downregulating disease progression and preserve memory (Kalampokini et al., 2019;
839 Victorino et al., 2021), including increasing anti-inflammatory microbiome (Nakayama and
840 Oishi, 2013), attenuating neuroinflammation (Brothers et al., 2010), and improving the
841 bioavailability of levodopa (Deleu et al., 2006), although the reliability of this effect is yet to
842 be demonstrated in humans (Postuma et al., 2017).

843 Additionally, the effect of caffeine on adenosine receptors A₁ and A_{2a} has been widely
844 established in animal models. A_{2a} receptors are ubiquitously distributed in brain areas known
845 as primary memory regions, including ventral and dorsal striatum, selected areas of cortex,

846 and hippocampus (Borea et al., 2018; Snyder et al., 1981). Habitual caffeine can reverse
847 memory impairments in the animal model of Alzheimer's disease by mimicking the effects of
848 selective inhibitors of A_{2a} receptors (Viana da Silva et al., 2016), while acute coffee
849 treatment increased plasma level of anti-inflammatory cytokines and granulocyte-colony
850 stimulating factors associated with WM improvements (Cao et al., 2011). Importantly, Cao et
851 al. (2011) also found no effects of caffeine solution alone or decaffeinated coffee treatments,
852 suggesting that these neuroprotective effects are only presented when caffeine is synergised
853 with other bioactive ingredients in coffee. Furthermore, both acute and chronic caffeine
854 prevented amyloid beta induced neurotoxicity and cognitive impairment (Canas et al., 2009;
855 Dall'Igna et al., 2007). The effect of an acute dose of caffeine in mimicking adenosine A_{2a}
856 receptor antagonists has also been demonstrated in animal models of other neuropsychiatric
857 diseases, such as preventing memory deficits in attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder
858 (ADHD) (Pires et al., 2009; Prediger et al., 2005b, 2005c). While an acute dose of caffeine
859 administered before learning did not alter performance in learning or testing in healthy
860 animals (Angelucci et al., 2002, 1999), here, it reversed the spatial learning deficits exhibited
861 in the spontaneously hypertensive rats (animal model of ADHD) (Prediger et al., 2005c).
862 There is also converging evidence on the role of caffeine in preventing secondary memory
863 deficits in animal models of chronic diseases, such as traumatic brain injury (Ning et al.,
864 2015) and diabetes (Duarte et al., 2012), likely through attenuating neuroinflammation and
865 glutamate excitotoxicity (Ning et al., 2015).

866 In animal models of ageing, habitual consumption (80 days before testing) of a
867 controlled diet with either brewed coffee or caffeine supplements, compared to a controlled
868 diet alone, improved animals' LTM in an object recognition task (Abreu et al., 2011). This
869 study also found reduced lipid peroxidation of brain membranes and increased concentration
870 and activities of antioxidants in rats ingesting the coffee or caffeine diet, indicating that
871 chronic intake can protect the antioxidant system in age-associated memory functions.
872 Although there is less evidence on the acute effects of caffeine in ageing, an acute dose at 10
873 or 30 mg/kg administered together with A_{2a} receptor antagonists reversed the ageing-related
874 deficits in olfactory memory (Prediger et al., 2005a). To the best of our knowledge, there is
875 no review of animal studies examining the chronic or acute effect of caffeine on learning and
876 memory in healthy animals. However, interested readers may refer to Victorino et al. (2021)
877 for a review of caffeine in the animal model of Parkinson's disease, Ferré et al. (2018) for
878 caffeine in the animal models of neuropsychiatric diseases, and Kolahdouzan and Hamadeh

879 (2017) for caffeine's neuroprotective mechanisms in animal and human studies. Note that
880 these highlighted reviews are established on neurological or neuropsychiatric disease models,
881 suggesting caffeine as a therapeutic tool, rather than a cognitive enhancer.

882 In keeping with animal studies, in humans, the physical and cognitive outcomes are
883 attributed to caffeine's drug effect on adenosine receptors A₁ and A_{2a} and rapid turnover of
884 neurotransmitters (Nehlig, 1999). Lesk and Womble (2004) proposed that caffeine alters
885 short-term plasticity in neurons of the phonological retrieval system through blocking A₁
886 adenosine receptors. It is believed that the interaction between A_{2a} and D₂ receptors in the
887 striatum underlies some of the drug effects of caffeine (Nehlig, 1999). Moreover, the
888 neuroprotective effects of habitual caffeine use shown in animal studies have also been
889 substantiated in human studies (Borea et al., 2018; Carman et al., 2014), demonstrating the
890 therapeutic potential of caffeine in preventing memory deficits associated with these
891 neurological diseases. However, compared to animal studies, limited evidence from human
892 studies have shown the effects of acute caffeine or coffee in preventing age-related memory
893 decline (Haller et al., 2013; Haskell-Ramsay et al., 2018; Schmitt et al., 2003). Taken
894 together, in humans, likely habitual, but not acute consumption can ameliorate some memory
895 deficits associated with ageing or neurodegenerative disease.

896 Although we did not focus on neuroimaging findings, in studies reviewed there is also
897 evidence that an acute dose of caffeine is related to activation of attentional networks, such as
898 bilateral medial frontopolar cortex extending to anterior cingulate gyrus (Koppelstaetter et al.,
899 2008), bilateral dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (PFC), and the left thalamus (Haller et al., 2017,
900 2013; Klaassen et al., 2013). Furthermore, lifelong habitual caffeine consumers compared to
901 non-coffee drinkers showed increased functional connectivity between cerebellar and several
902 subcortical areas known to be involved in attention, arousal, and memory acquisition,
903 including the thalamus, lingual and inferior occipital gyrus, and parahippocampus
904 (Magalhães et al., 2021). In electroencephalography studies, caffeine is associated with
905 increased prestimulus alpha amplitude (Trunk et al., 2015), and an increase in the theta
906 activity in the right PFC, central, and temporal areas (Ueda and Nakao, 2019). Together,
907 these results suggested the role of caffeine in modulating the top-down attention network.
908 However, these studies either did not include memory assessments or find the treatment
909 effects of caffeine on any memory measures beyond improved reaction times, making
910 interpretation of the neuroimaging data difficult.

911 Given these pharmacological mechanisms and neural associations, it is surprising that
912 our results showed very limited treatment effects of caffeine on memory performance.
913 Moreover, despite the established neuroprotective effects, several studies reported that
914 caffeine administered before learning impaired memory performance. This effect may be
915 dose-related, at low levels, caffeine can be a cognitive enhancer, while at high levels it
916 inhibits working memory dependent learning (Nehlig, 2010). Our findings correspond to a
917 recent meta-analysis identifying no association between habitual consumption and long term
918 memory functions after controlling for genetic variations, except a small positive effect on
919 prospective memory (Zhou et al., 2018). Where effects were found, participants' improved
920 mood and arousal may underly the elevated memory encoding. In other words, caffeine can
921 indirectly participate in the memory processes by increasing attentional control and
922 processing resources or modulating learning factors including mood, concentration, arousal,
923 and alertness. As increased attentional control and processing resources no longer modifies
924 the strengths of memory representations during retrieval, caffeine administered after a long
925 retention interval and immediately before testing does not impact retrieval.

926 Similar interactions between caffeine and sex, where a larger protective effect for
927 females than males has been reported in a systematic review (Panza et al., 2015). However,
928 Panza et al. (2015) focused on the role of habitual caffeine consumption in preventing
929 cognitive decline and dementia, without detailing mechanisms underlying this sex effect.
930 Given the various metabolic pathways of caffeine, habitual consumption may participate in
931 physiological processes that affect global cognition (de Mejia and Ramirez-Mares, 2014), but
932 this does not translate to the effect of caffeine on memory tasks in the healthy population.
933 Taken together, an acute dose of caffeine does not have a direct effect on memory but can
934 affect performance in either direction through other modulating pathways. On the other hand,
935 habitual consumption influences memory included global cognition mainly in clinical
936 populations, indicating that caffeine should not be viewed as a memory enhancer, but instead
937 a normaliser which attenuates memory decline associated with ageing or neurodegenerative
938 diseases (Cunha and Agostinho, 2010).

939 **6.3. Limitations and future directions**

940 With respect to drug factors, only a few studies compared the effects of different doses and
941 often did not justify the selected dose categories (Arnold et al., 1987; Borota et al., 2014;
942 Erikson et al., 1985; Loke, 1988). Despite reported memory outcomes under different doses,

943 none systematically examined a dose-response relationship with more nuanced statistical
944 approaches. There is also a lack of disaggregation of the treatment effect for caffeine from
945 various sources of caffeine-containing foodstuffs (Noguchi-Shinohara et al., 2014). In the
946 discussed epidemiological studies and those adopted quasi-experimental designs,
947 participants' diet (Verly et al., 2017), sleep-wake cycles (Park et al., 2018), and time of the
948 day of assessments (Anderson et al., 1991; Hasher et al., 2005) might have independently
949 affected memory or interacted with habitual caffeine consumption to confound the latter's
950 effect. For experimental factors, none of the studies using oral administration justified the
951 specific absorption time used (Fredholm et al., 1999), or considered participants' baseline
952 tolerance or individual variations in caffeine metabolism (Kalow, 1985; Nehlig, 2018). In
953 terms of the demographic factors, some studies have reported the interaction between
954 caffeine and sex, but this was limited by the lack of a defined dose-response relationship
955 (Arnold et al., 1987; Erikson et al., 1985), or a more detailed description of the effects
956 (Haskell-Ramsay et al., 2018). Given the evidence that polymorphisms in A1 and A2a
957 adenosine receptor genes play a role in anxiety regulation (Alsene et al., 2003), individual
958 genetic variability is associated with the tendency to habitually consume caffeine, acute
959 caffeine-related responses such as level of anxiety and insomnia, magnitude of withdrawal,
960 and the risks to certain health outcomes (Alsene et al., 2003; Kendler, 1999; Yang et al.,
961 2010). Furthermore, in complex cognitive control tasks involving attention and executive
962 functioning, the effect of caffeine can be partly explained by genetic polymorphisms of
963 adenosine and adrenergic receptors (Renda et al., 2015). These evidence highlight the need
964 for recruiting more homogenous samples in future studies. A few studies recruiting unisex
965 samples also failed to provide justifications on their sampling approach (Alharbi et al., 2018;
966 Klaassen et al., 2013; Koppelstaetter et al., 2008; Lanini et al., 2016; Ueda and Nakao, 2019).
967 Similarly, despite some studies recruiting only older participants reported the interaction
968 between caffeine and age-related factors, such as the time of day effect, whether this effect
969 can exhibit in younger adults have not been examined. Studies investigating the age-related
970 caffeine effect also rarely examined changes in caffeine metabolism due to lifelong habitual
971 consumption (Addicott et al., 2009).

972 Future experiments assessing the effect of caffeine on memory can benefit from
973 several considerations. First, clearly defined dose categories, duration, and types of caffeine
974 exposure based on the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of caffeine should be used
975 to further establishment of a dose-response relationship (Shi et al., 1993). Analysis of

976 additional demographic factors should take into consideration of the dose-response
977 relationship, for example, how sex-related hormonal variations or age can moderate dose-
978 response. Second, baseline evaluation should include habitual consumption of caffeine-
979 containing foodstuffs, detailing caffeine intake from various source. Where possible, pre-
980 experimental dietary and sleep schedules should be collected. Instead of using pre-
981 experimental fasting, an ad libitum study without fasting, or an alternating exposure-
982 abstinence protocol can prevent withdrawal effect or inflation of treatment effect when paired
983 with appropriate statistical procedures controlling for caffeine intake (Aust and Stahl, 2020;
984 James, 1998). Furthermore, periodical, noninvasive physical measures such as pupil diameter
985 and salivary caffeine metabolites can provide supporting information on tolerance and
986 absorption, allowing for analysis of individual variances in treatment effects. Finally, despite
987 heterogeneity in working memory and long term memory measures, most relied on verbal
988 stimuli. There is currently insufficient research on visuospatial long term memory
989 performance under the effects of caffeine. The positive treatment effects of caffeine on
990 prospective memory and implicit memory measures also highlight an area of future
991 exploration. The effects of caffeine compared with other cognitive enhancers should be
992 continuously examined in future research.

993 **6.4. Conclusion**

994 Based on the studies reviewed, there is no reliable evidence that habitual consumption or an
995 experimentally administered dose of caffeine can affect healthy participants' performance in
996 various working memory, short term memory, or long term memory tasks. However, most
997 studies found a positive effect on reaction times. Due to the lack of baseline control or
998 appropriate statical procedures, most studies including dose-response analysis found an
999 inconsistent relationship between caffeine and memory. Only a few reported an interaction
1000 between caffeine and demographic factors such as sex and age. Where effects were found, the
1001 direction of the treatment effect may depend on the given dose and individual tolerance and
1002 metabolism at baseline. Future studies should include a more comprehensive assessment of i)
1003 drug factors, such as clearly defined dose categories, and source or type of caffeine, ii)
1004 experimental factors, such as a wider variety of visuospatial, prospective, and implicit
1005 memory measures, and iii) individual factors, such as habitual caffeine consumption,
1006 tolerance, and metabolism.

1007

1008 **Disclosure of Interest**

1009 The authors reported no conflict of interest.

1010

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