

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



988 Brewing Up Paid Research

If you're a non-stop coffee drinker, and I mean non-stop, today may be the day you've been waiting for. Maybe. I'm Jerry Roberts, and I've got something percolating for you, next, on The Extra Point.

As someone famous once said: "There are lies, damned lies, and statistics." Who said it? Historians think they know, that it was a Brit named Sir Charles Dilke, who wrote about such things in the mid-to-late 1800s. Many others have also been credited with the quote, including American writer Mark Twain.

When you have no idea who said something, do what the so-called experts and amateur journalists like me do, credit it to Twain or Albert Einstein. "Who said that, Jerry?... Uhh, Mark Twain, Albert Einstein, yeah." I mean, who is ever going to challenge that?

So, lies, damned lies, and statistics. The point of the statement is that there are degrees of manipulation and stretching the truth, or perpetuating an untruth. But there's more.

Paid research takes this to a completely different level. This is where your lies, damned lies, and statistics are generated through the funding of somebody who is interested in the public buying into all that. And could that be for purposes of generating a profit?

I get a daily newsletter from this congenial fellow, and last night it had a slew of coffee-based research projects. Let me just give you the highlights.

1. A 2018 study of 500,000 British adults, over a full decade, showed that coffee drinkers were 10-15% less likely to die from any cause than non-drinkers. According to the study authors, this may be possible because "coffee contains more than 1,000 chemical compounds including antioxidants, which help protect

cells from damage." The implication? All 1,000 of those chemical compounds are making love to your insides, at the same time. Of course they are.

2. In 2017, the University of Colorado School of Medicine found that every additional cup of coffee people drink each day drops their risk of heart failure or stroke by 8%.

Drink 13 cups, times 8%, that's 104%, which means you may just live forever by drinking coffee. No, it doesn't say that, but I like the obvious mathematical implications.

3. A study from Stanford University said that people who drink caffeinated coffee live longer (sorry, decaf drinkers), perhaps because the caffeine counteracts naturally occurring inflammation, which is in turn associated with "90% of all noncommunicable diseases of aging."

4. Ooh, Harvard. I've mentioned Stanford and Harvard in the same commentary, 20 seconds apart. Simon Sanchez, who was Phi Beta Delta Theta at both schools, ought to be buzzing. Harvard School of Public Health followed 200,000 doctors and nurses over 30 years, and found a correlation between increased coffee consumption and lower risk of death from heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and neurological diseases.

5. A study of 5,000 Europeans suggested that drinking a cup of coffee (containing about 75 milligrams of caffeine) every four hours can result in better moods during the day. Better moods, get along better with coworkers. There it is, the answer for the workplace — get more wired, get less fired.

(Con't.)

Pretty good day for coffee, wouldn't you say?
So, why would I want to mess that up?

Is it possible that all this goodness about coffee is true? Remember that thing about "lies, damned lies, statistics"?

Research ain't free. Researchers are hired to conduct paid research. Paid research is a profit center for places like colleges and universities. Colleges and universities, even the big name places, do a lot of studies on commercial stuff like coffee, so they can have the funding for projects that really benefit humankind.

Is it possible that the entity funding the research might end up with some positive stuff they can use, or only end up promoting aspects of the studies which put their product in the best possible light?

Hmmm...when you see a study that says "three daily servings of Captain Crunch builds Olympic athletes," you might have questions when you see the funding source is the *Global Institute for Advanced Nutritional Studies*. Who might be behind that? The Captain? Just sayin'. Yo-ho-ho.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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