

# Litres a day waste the muscles away

**PARIS: A steady, litres-a-day diet of colas can cause serious muscle problems, doctors warned in a study this week.**

A review of clinical cases showed that super-sized doses of soft drinks loaded with processed sugars and caffeine can cause potassium levels in the blood to plummet, giving rise to a condition known as hypokalaemia.

Small changes in potassium levels can profoundly affect the functioning of the body's cardiovascular and neuromuscular systems.

Typical symptoms of hypokalaemia are decreased muscle strength, cramping, palpitations and nausea.

In more extreme cases, potassium deficiency can lead to heart trouble and profound paralysis.

"We are consuming more soft drinks than ever before and a number of health issues have already been identified," including tooth decay, loss of bone mass and diabetes, said Moses Elisaf, a doctor at the University of Ioannina in Greece and the main architect of the study.

"Excessive cola consumption can also lead to hypokalaemia, causing an adverse effect on vital muscle functions," he said in a statement.

The study reviewed case studies in which patients drank two to nine litres of soda beverages a day, including two pregnant women admitted to hospital with dangerously low potassium levels.

One of the women complained of fatigue, appetite loss and vomiting, while the other - who had been drinking up to seven litres of cola a day over the previous 10 months - suffered from muscular weakness.

Both patients made a rapid and full recovery after they stopped drinking cola and took oral or intravenous potassium, reported the study, to be published in June in the International Journal of Clinical Practice.

The study suggests that hypokalaemia can be caused by excessive consumption of three of the most common ingredients in cola-type drinks - glucose, fructose and caffeine.

"The individual role of each of these ingredients in the pathophysiology of cola-induced hypokalaemia has not

been determined and may vary in different patients," said Elisaf. "However, in most of the cases we looked at, caffeine intoxication was thought to play the most important role," he added.

In a commentary to be published in the same journal, Clifford Packer from the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Centre in Ohio said doctors should take note.

"Cola drinks need to be added to the physician's checklist of drugs and substances that can cause hypokalaemia," he said.

In 2007, worldwide annual consumption of soft drinks reached 552-billion litres, the equivalent of 83 litres per person per year, according to the study. That figure is expected to climb to 95 litres a day by 2012. -



## Maria Makridakis jailed for six years over drunken high-speed crash

*Article from the Herald Sun*

A WOMAN who killed two friends and injured three others in a drunken high-speed crash will spend the next six years in jail.

Maria Makridakis, 26, was today sentenced to 10-and-a-half years jail, with a minimum of six years, after pleading guilty to culpable driving causing the deaths of Lirijeta Sulemani, 18, and Chanelle Metcalfe, 22.

Makridakis, of Oakleigh, had also pleaded guilty to negligently causing serious injury to Lirijeta Sulemani's sister, Lumjeta Sulemanovski, then 22, and Constance Valiontis, who was 21. Also injured was Makridakis's twin sister, Yvonne.

In sentencing Makridakis, County Court judge Liz Gaynor said: "This whole situation is simply a tragedy."

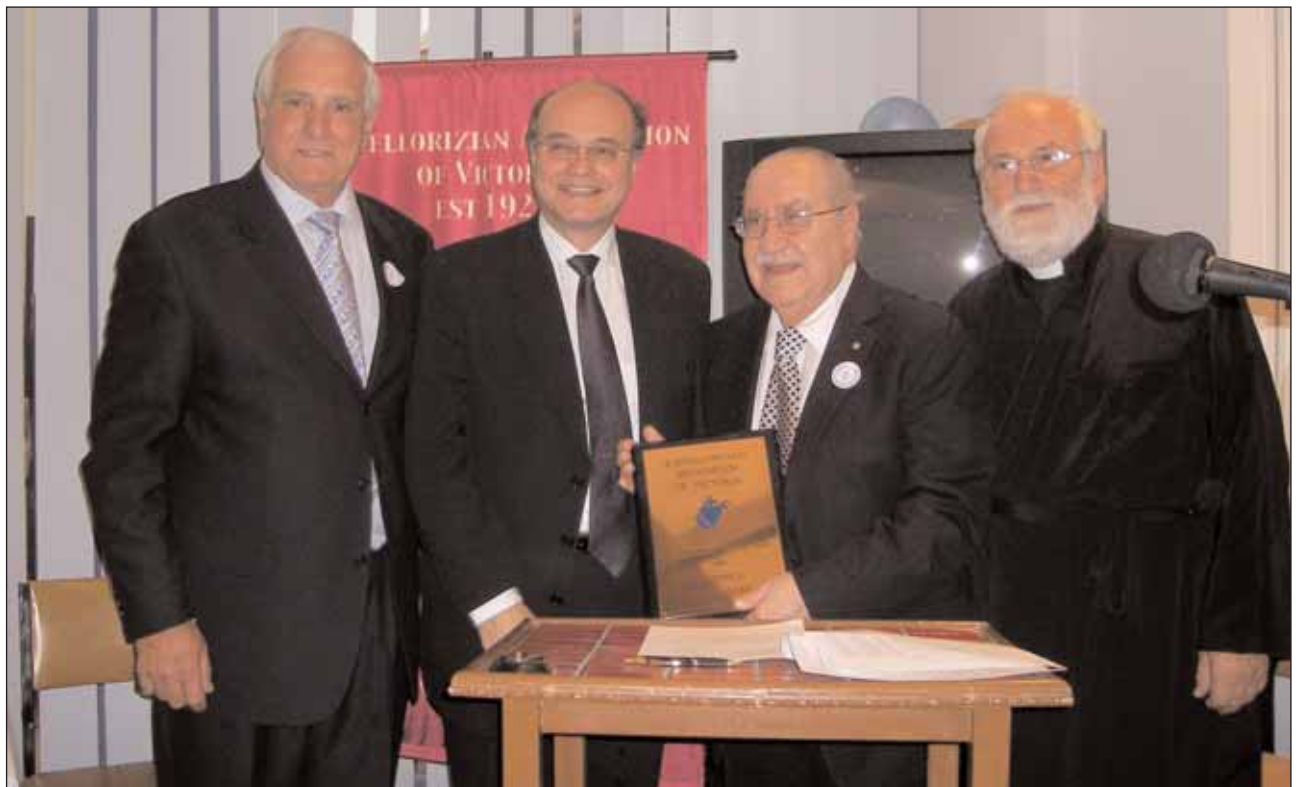
In relation to the two victims, the judge said: "Their deaths have caused ongoing agony and grief which continues to this day. She said the crash had taken the lives of two bright, beautiful women and left at least one of the survivors with ongoing physical and mental scars. Judge Gaynor said grieving families had been left in its wake and she had been forced to sentence a young woman from a law-abiding family who'd never expected one of their own to ever have to face court and go to jail. She told Makridakis: "I accept your behaviour on this night was out of character", but she said her actions were a serious example of "these most serious criminal offences."

Makridakis' friends died in the high-speed crash on Dandenong Rd on September 22, 2006.

Earlier, the court heard Makridakis was driving her sports car with the five others on board at up to 180km/h along the 70km/h stretch of road.

The court was told that after ignoring at least one plea to slow down, she lost control and oversteered travelling about 146km/h.

Her 1989 Nissan 300ZX flipped and hit a tree, before smashing into a brick fence. Makridakis recorded a blood-alcohol reading of .136 after the accident. Relatives of the victims clashed verbally with relatives of Makridakis and had to be separated inside the court room.



Left to right: President of the Kastellorizian Association of Victoria Mr. Michael Spartels, Consul-General of Greece Mr. Christos Salamanis, Kastellorizian of the Year Mr. John B Salvaris OAM, Father Demetrious from St Constantine and St Helen's Church, South Yarra.

## Kastellorizians Honoured at the annual St Constantine and St Helen's Day Celebrations

Several Kastellorizians were honoured at the annual St Constantine and St Helen's day celebrations on Sunday the 24th of May, 2009.

The celebrations and awards ceremony was attended by the Consul-General of Greece, Mr Christos Salaminis, Reverend Father Demetrious and over 120 guests.

Mr John B Salvaris was awarded the 2009 Kastellorizian of the Year for his involvement in the Kastellorizian, Greek and Australian communities. His most noteworthy contribution to the greater community was his role as the foundation President of the Greek Australian Society for the Care of the Elderly 1976-1987 which was the foundation body that has gone onto to establish the Greek s-

peaking nursing hostels and homes now known as Frothida.

Ms Lisa Caripis was awarded the Kastellorizian Youth Achievement award for her voluntary work at the Fitzroy Community Legal Centre and as the Victorian Director of the Youth Climate Leadership Program for the AYCC. Lisa is also recognized by the Kastellorizian Community for involvement in re-establishing the Kastellorizian Youth.

Acknowledgement awards for the completion VCE were awarded to Jasmin Eve Urlik, Grace Loukides and Nicholas Vasilios Antonopoulos.

Also at the ceremony, Christina Pavlou, Andrew Caripis and Nic Zervos were presented with honorary life memberships for their contribution of 30 years of service to the Association.