

Prevalence of Dietary Supplement Use Among Gym Users And Nonusers In Trinidad

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Background: There has been an increase in the interest of dietary supplement and in its use. There is currently a broad variety of supplements available to consumers including single-ingredient preparations, various combinations of vitamins, minerals, botanicals and herbals. Dietary supplements are being marketed to consumers through various forms of media, including advertisements, research articles and studies detailing associations with specific health conditions.

Objectives: To identify the prevalence and patterns of dietary supplement use in Trinidad and Tobago.

Method: Survey data was collected from 120 participants from the 27th October -3rd November using a convenience sampling method. The respondents were recruited from various locations throughout Trinidad, including members of two gyms. The data collection instrument used to obtain information was a 29-item self-completed questionnaire. SPSS for Windows version 12.0 was used to produce both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: More than three quarters of the respondents' (75.8%) reported using dietary supplements. The most frequently reported supplements used were multivitamins (44.2%), vitamin C (29.3%) and B-complex vitamins (29.2%). Use of herbals was found to be under-reported. Supplement use between gym users and nonusers was not significantly different. Two useful predictors of multivitamin use were perception of health (OR=.015, CI=1.184, 4.673) and body mass index (BMI) (OR=0.029, CI=.311, .939). Physical activity had a positive association with vitamin C and multivitamin use (OR=3.455, CI=1.353, 8.820). The most common reasons for supplement use were for general health (38.5%) and to complement one's lifestyle and diet (33.0%). The majority of participants also believed that dietary supplements provide health benefits.

Conclusion: There is widespread use of dietary supplements in Trinidad and users are quite knowledgeable about their benefits and limitations. More extensive research can provide greater insight on the subject