

Author's response to reviews

Title: Usage patterns, health, and nutritional status of long-term multiple dietary supplement users: a cross-sectional study

Authors:

Gladys Block (gblock@berkeley.edu)
Christopher D Jensen (cjensen@berkeley.edu)
Edward P Norkus (enorkus@olmhs.org)
Tapashi B Dalvi (tapashi@berkeley.edu)
Les G Wong (lwong@shaklee.com)
Jamie F McManus (jmcmamus@shaklee.com)
Mark L Hudes (mlhudes@hotmail.com)

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Nutrition Journal

Editorial Team

Dear Nutrition Journal Editorial Team,

We were very pleased to see the favorable reviewer comments on our manuscript (MS: 4652548861408066 - Usage patterns, health, and nutritional status of long-term multiple dietary supplement users: a cross-sectional study). Our responses to these helpful comments follow and the revised manuscript is attached:

Response to Reviewer 1: John Hathcock

Minor Essential Revisions

¿ As requested, the methodology section now includes statements clarifying that the geographical distribution of the individuals in the three users groups is not known, and that duration of dietary supplement usage by NHANES participants, aside from the 30 days prior to their home interview, is unknown.

Discretionary Revisions

¿ As suggested, the limitations of a cross-sectional study for implications of causality have been made stronger. Specifically, the discussion of the limitations of the study leads with a statement that an important limitation of the study is the fact that the data are cross-sectional, and therefore the reported associations, particularly with health outcomes (ie, blood pressure and diabetes), cannot presume causality.

Response to Reviewer 2: Jaime Wilger

Major Compulsory Revisions

¿ The main concern raised was whether NHANES data were weighted and analyzed using statistical software programs that take the complex sample design into account. After consultation with the National Center for Health Statistics and our statistician, we have re-analyzed the data. We reweighted the data for this sample, and created variance estimates using SUDAAN. This is now described in detail under Methods. We have highlighted changed data in the text, and changed the data in the tables. We have also pointed out that the results should not be interpreted as being nationally representative samples. The analyses did not substantially change any results nor the conclusions.

Minor Essential Revisions

¿ As requested, the methodology section now clarifies that, among NHANES participants, the time interval to which the question about dietary supplement usage applies was the 30 days prior to their home interview.

¿ As requested, the methodology section has also been revised to clarify that single supplement users were only included if they reported taking the supplement 15 days or more over the 30 days preceding their home interview.

Discretionary Revisions

¿ The discussion now includes mention of the possibility that healthier diets and lifestyles may be contributing factors to the more favorable concentrations of biomarkers generally observed in the multiple supplement users.

¿ Finally, the title of Table 2 has been changed to clearly differentiate the sources of the three user groups.

I hope these responses adequately address the helpful comments from the reviewers. Thank you again for considering our manuscript for publication in the Nutrition Journal and I look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,

Christopher Jensen, PhD, MPH

School of Public Health

University of California

Berkeley, CA 94720