

Dietary Supplement Perception and Usage Pattern Among the Chinese Older Population: A Pilot Study

Boya Li, Xuyang Guo, and Cristen Harris

University of Washington

Objectives: The usage of dietary supplements (DS) is increasingly prevalent in China. The purpose of this pilot study was to examine DS use and the factors that influence the buying and usage.

Methods: Data is from an anonymous, self-developed, online questionnaire administered to Chinese adults ≥ 60 years. Statistical analyses were conducted using chi-square, independent *t*-tests, and single-factor ANOVA to test differences in DS usage among characteristic-based stratified groups.

Results: 75 participants were anonymously recruited (66.7% female). The most popular DS was calcium (74.7%). Participants' children

were the most prevalent source for hearing about and obtaining DS (59%). Participants who completed senior high or higher used more DS than those who completed junior high or lower, $P = 0.011$. Participants living in the North and Northeast Hukou regions took fewer DS than those in other regions, $P = 0.007$. No significant differences were found in the prevalence of DS use in relation to chronic disease diagnoses.

Conclusions: The results show the lack of awareness and knowledge of DS use. Appropriate guidance and scientific education about DS, such as the benefits and risks of different types of DS and the effectiveness of DS related to chronic diseases, should be provided to Chinese older people by public health departments, healthcare providers, and even DS companies in the future. Older Chinese adults with higher education and living in the North and Northeast Hukou regions are more likely to use DS.

Funding Sources: None.