

What do we know about supplement users?

MRC Human Nutrition Research has taken a closer look at the behaviours of supplement users.. Published in this month's Journal of Nutrition, the study found that the use of supplements may be one of a number of health-related behaviours that cluster together.

Recent dietary surveys in the UK found that 40% of women and 29% of men aged 19-64 reported taking supplements, a dramatic increase over the past two decades. The study showed that supplement users had a lower BMI, participated in physical activity and had healthier diets compared to those who do not take supplements. Non supplement users also tended to avoid breakfast cereals, fruit, fruit juice, yogurt, oily fish and olive oil.

The MRC National Survey of Health and Development is a longitudinal study of health using a sample of 5362 people born in the first week of March 1946. For the purpose of this research, the participants were interviewed at the age of 53 years and were representative of 53 year olds in native born population.

Commenting on the paper, Dr Sarah McNaughton, lead scientist at HNR said 'This research shows us that those people who take supplements regularly are healthier overall than those who don't take supplements. It also supports the theory that those taking the supplements may be the least likely to need them.'

The publication of the study coincides with the decision by the EU to uphold the food supplements directive that will enforce the of types of ingredients in supplements and will clamp down on the quantities of different nutrients allowed.

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