

Knowledge and use of dietary supplements among gym-goers from Colombo District

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Gym-goers often seek ways to enhance their well-being and physical performance. As a result, many turn to dietary supplements as a means of augmenting their health and supporting fitness goals, particularly in the face of modern lifestyle challenges that may contribute to non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The widespread availability of dietary supplements and inconsistent regulatory awareness have led to misconceptions and potential misuse. While international studies have explored supplement use among gym-goers, research in Sri Lanka has primarily focused on athletes. Objective of this study is to assess the knowledge and use of supplements among gym-goers from selected gyms in the Colombo District. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 128 gym-goers across three selected gyms by systematic sampling during peak hours of weekdays and weekends. Data were collected through an interviewer-administered, expert-validated questionnaire covering sociodemographic factors, supplement knowledge and usage. An 18-item tool assessed knowledge as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS, applying chi-square tests to assess associations. Knowledge about dietary supplements was satisfactory for 79.7% (n=102) of participants, though understanding of supplement regulation was low. The prevalence of use of dietary supplements was (57.8, n=74), predominantly among males (70.3%, n=54). Multivitamins and minerals were the most commonly used supplements (50%, n=37), followed by proteins and amino acids (47.3%, n=35). Significant associations were found between supplement usage with age and monthly income level. In conclusion, there is a notable prevalence of dietary supplement use, particularly among males. However, significant knowledge gaps remain, especially concerning supplement regulation, highlighting the need for improved education. This could be effectively addressed through targeted workshops or informational sessions held at gyms. Furthermore, providing guidance tailored to individuals' income levels and age groups may help promote more informed and responsible use of supplements.

Keywords: *Supplement use, Gym goers, Knowledge*