

# **KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND AWARENESS REGARDING THE USE OF NATURAL SUPPLEMENTS FOR WEIGHT LOSS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Natural weight loss supplements have achieved great interest globally due to the claimed beneficial health effects that these products can provide the effect in the body and the perception that these supplements possess less side effects as manufactured from ingredients that are found from natural sources. Considering easy availability without a prescription, less toxicity and comparatively more appealing alternative to diet and exercise, these supplements are being highly promoted. However, they are associated with some interactions including supplement-supplement interactions and drug-supplement interactions. This study aimed to assess the knowledge, attitude and awareness of the people in Karachi regarding the use of natural supplements for weight loss and to analyze whether any guideline is available for the use of Natural weight loss supplements by FDA. A cross-sectional survey-based study was performed in Karachi. 290 respondents (aged 18 or above) were contacted and their knowledge, attitude and awareness were evaluated by collecting data through an online Google questionnaire. By using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, results were analyzed. Among the 290 respondents, 40.7% (n= 118) were males and 59.3 % (n=172) were females. Majority, 56% (n=163), are aware of the beneficial effects of natural weight loss supplements. However, only 18.6% (n=54) of population have ever used any natural product to reduce weight. It is concluded that positive findings were obtained regarding the awareness as majority of the population is aware about the benefits of natural weight loss supplements. However, less percentage of population consumes natural products to reduce weight. Hence, there is a significant need to develop strong and effective health education programs to enhance better use of natural supplements. It is further identified that there is no pre marketing trials and guideline restrictions are available for these supplements.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

One of the main issues in numerous nations is obesity. (Dastjerdi, Akhgari et al. 2018) The prevalence of obesity has been steadily rising over the past few decades throughout the world, which has led to an increase in the prevalence of numerous weight-related complications, some of which are well known, such as Type 2 Diabetes (T2D), obstructive sleep apnea syndrome (OSAS), non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), and cardiovascular disease (Watanabe, Risi et al. 2020)

Numerous factors, such as sedentary lifestyles, high-fat diets, and consumption of a lot of processed foods, have been linked to the epidemic of obesity. There is a huge variety of weight-loss-focused products on the shelves of pharmacies and health food stores. Due to the negative impact they have on things like cardiac valvular function, some of these have recently made headlines. (Rauf, Akram et al. 2022)

According to clinical recommendations, successful weight loss and weight maintenance necessitate behavioral and lifestyle changes like calorie restriction and increased

physical activity.(Dastjerdi, Akhgari et al. 2018) . Natural products are frequently used to treat obesity and overweight people. But many people look for alternatives to lifestyle modification because such changes are challenging and demand a lot of effort. With sales of weight-loss supplements estimated to reach >\$1.6 billion in 2005, Americans are turning to them more frequently as a means of weight loss. Supplements for your diet are widely advertised in advertisements with claims of effectiveness and are easily accessible without a prescription. They are also marketed as requiring less effort than more conventional behavioral changes like diet and exercise. Though many dietary supplements for weight loss are marketed to consumers, there are surprisingly few scientific studies on their safety or effectiveness. (Pillitteri, Shiffman et al. 2007)

Pharmacists must provide patients with appropriate advice, and doctors must be knowledgeable about the effectiveness, safety, and caliber of popular weight-loss supplements. It is important to take into account the possibility of drug/supplement interactions since supplement users may also be taking prescription medications. Manufacturers are not required to give the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proof of their efficacy and safety. (Richardson, Akkas et al. 2022).

Garcinia cambogia extract, a popular natural supplement for weight loss, has been shown in animal studies to inhibit the body's ability to produce fat while also raising serotonin levels, which may help reduce cravings. The best natural supplement for weight loss is green coffee bean extract, which can increase fat burning and slow the breakdown of carbohydrates in the gut thanks to chlorogenic acid. Caffeine affects weight regulation by increasing energy expenditure, which essentially means you burn more calories through increased fat breakdown as well as through a process of body heat production known as thermogenesis. By preventing the breakdown of fat in the gut, the weight-loss drug orlistat causes you to consume fewer calories from fat. (Hermayanti and Teka 2022).

Some of the most well-known supplements make claims about enhancing nutrition, increasing energy, constructing lean muscle, or reducing fat. Dietary supplements are not prescription drugs. They are not intended to treat or cure illness.

The security of the products that manufacture supplements is their responsibility. They must make sure that their products are clean and correctly labeled.

The U.S. government does not need to approve dietary supplements. S. FDA is short for Food and Drug Administration. However, the FDA can issue warnings or request that a supplement be taken off the market if it turns out to be unsafe.(Alyea and Cody).

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

The aims of a campaign or study on "Knowledge, Attitude, and Awareness Regarding the Use of Natural Supplements for Weight Loss" include assessing the current level of knowledge about these supplements, understanding public attitudes and beliefs, raising awareness about benefits and risks, and promoting safe decision-making. The objectives involve conducting baseline surveys, identifying misconceptions, evaluating attitudes, disseminating accurate information, measuring campaign impact, offering resources, promoting responsible use, monitoring changes

over time, and collaborating with experts to foster informed decision-making. These aims and objectives collectively aim to empower individuals with the knowledge and awareness needed to make informed choices about natural supplements for weight management.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The cross sectional survey based study was performed in karachi among 300 repondents aged 18 above were contacted and their knowledge,attitude and awareness was evaluated by collecting data through google questionnaire.by using SPSS software we analyzed the results.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION:**

A total of 300 correctly completed Google forms were returned by the study participants, and their data were included. In this research, out of 300 participants most of them were Undergraduate students (n=162; 54%) in which the majority of them were in between the age group of 18-24(n=212;70.6%). Table#1.

### **Knowledge toward Natural Supplements:**

In this survey, we examined the respondents' demographic details, paying particular attention to gender, age, and education. According to the data, there are more female respondents (60.3%) than male respondents (40.2%). Additionally, a substantial percentage of respondents (70.6%) fall into the 18–24 age range, indicating that the survey's target audience is primarily young. In terms of education, a sizable part of respondents (54%) holds undergraduate degrees, whereas lower proportion (28.4%) and (9.8%) hold graduate and postgraduate degrees. Table#1

### **Attitude towards Natural Supplements:**

A critical piece of respondents (60%) portrayed their wellbeing as "Great," demonstrating that they by and large view their wellbeing emphatically. Nearly 16.2 percent of respondents rated their health as "Excellent." A smaller percentage of respondents (22.3%) described their health as "Fair," and only 2% referred to it as "Poor." Most respondents (61.6%) sorted themselves as having a "Ordinary" weight. Around 22.3% of respondents felt that they were "Overweight." A more modest level of respondents viewed themselves as "Underweight" (14.5%), while just 2% accepted they had an "Weight" issue. A positive attitude toward weight management can be seen in the fact that 60.6% of respondents believe that losing weight can improve their health. Nonetheless, a huge part (31.4%) communicated incredulity, expressing that they don't think getting thinner further develops wellbeing. A more modest gathering (8.4%) showed vulnerability by choosing "Don't have the foggiest idea." A significant part of respondents (57%) know about the advantages related with regular weight reduction supplements, mirroring some degree of information around here. Natural supplements are viewed favorably by the majority, 60.3%, who believe they are safe and

effective for weight loss. Moreover, a huge piece (64%) thinks about normal enhancements better than physician endorsed medications for weight reduction, demonstrating an inclination for regular cures. There is a wide range of opinion regarding whether natural weight loss supplements can substitute for diet and exercise. While 38.5% accept they can, a somewhat bigger extent (45.3%) dissents, underscoring the significance of customary eating routine and exercise. "Health purposes" appears to be the primary reason for taking natural weight loss supplements (41.6%). Twenty percent of people use these supplements as an "Alternative to diet and/or exercise," indicating that they want to lose weight without making major lifestyle changes. A significant number of respondents, 42.3%, have reservations about the safety of natural weight loss supplements, stating that they "May cause harm." Worries about cooperations, including "Medication supplement association" (11%) and "supplement collaboration" (8.6%), likewise exist among certain respondents. Natural weight loss supplements are recommended by a variety of sources, with a significant percentage (62 percent) saying "No one" recommended them. Medical care experts (10.9%), companions (14.6%), family members (6.5%), and different sources (6.1%) likewise assume a part in making these suggestions. Most of the P-values are less than 0,01, therefore our result typically demonstrates weaker relationship. However, very few of them have a P-value that is greater than 0.01, indicating a strong relationship. Also, the outcome is significant.

### **Practice towards Natural Supplements:**

In the section titled "How Would You Define Your Health?" category, 60.0 percent of respondents rated their health as "Good." Only a small percentage, just 2.0 percent, categorized their health as "Poor". Concerning, a critical extent of respondents (61.6%) sorted themselves as "Ordinary," while a more modest rate fell into the "Underweight," "Overweight," and "Heftiness" classes. While 31.4% of respondents disagreed, a sizable portion (60.6%) of respondents believe that losing weight can improve their health. The majority (90.6 percent) agreed that gaining weight raises one's risk of developing long-term conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure. A high rate (81.0%) of respondents have utilized normal items to lessen weight. The majority of respondents (91.6%) have sought treatment for weight loss from a doctor. While the larger part (57.0%) know about the advantages of normal weight reduction supplements, a critical piece (43.6%) are not. A greater part (60.3%) accept that normal enhancements are protected and powerful for weight reduction. Natural supplements for weight loss are favored by a sizable portion (64.0%) over prescription drugs. A smaller percentage, 38.5 percent, agreed when asked if natural weight loss supplements were an option to diet and exercise. Natural weight loss supplements are most frequently used for "health reasons" (41.6 percent). Concerning safety concerns, 42.3 percent are of the opinion that natural weight loss supplements may be harmful. "no one" (62.0%) was the most common response from those who recommended natural weight loss supplements, followed by recommendations from friends (14.6%) and healthcare professionals (10.9%). Most of the P-values are less than 0.01, therefore our result typically demonstrates weaker relationship. However, very few of them have a P-value that is greater than 0.01, indicating a strong relationship. Also, the outcome is significant.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics and knowledge (N=300)

VARIABLES	OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
<b>GENDER</b>	Male	119	40.2
	female	181	60.3
<b>AGE</b>	18-24	212	70.6
	25-35	74	25
	36-45	5	1.7
	46-59	7	2.4
	60 and above	2	0.7
<b>EDUCATION</b>	Matriculation	8	2.7
	Intermediate	17	5.7
	Under graduate	162	54
	Graduate	84	28.4
	Post graduate	29	9.8

Table 2. Attitude towards Natural Supplements (N=300)

Variables		Goodness of Fit		
Question	Options	Response	%age	P-value
How Would You Describe Your Health?	Excellent	48	16.2	P< 0.01
	Good	180	60	
	Fair	66	22.3	
	poor	6	2	
How Would You Describe Your Weight?	Underweight	43	14.5	P<0.01
	Normal	185	61.6	
	Overweight	66	22.3	
	obesity	6	2	
Do You Think That Loosing Weight Can Improve Your Health?	Yes	182	60.6	P<0.01
	No	93	31.4	
	Don't know	25	8.4	

Increase In Weight Increases The Risk Of Developing Chronic Illnesses Such As Diabetes And High Blood Pressure.	Agree	272	90.6	P<0.01
	Disagree	9	3	
	Neither agree nor disagree	19	6.4	
Have You Ever Used Any Natural Product To Reduce Weight?	Yes	243	81	P<0.01
	No	57	19.3	
Have You Ever Sought Doctor's Assistance For Weight Loss Therapy?	Yes	275	91.6	P<0.01
	No	25	8.4	
Are You Aware Of The Benefits Of Natural Weight Loss Supplements?	Yes	171	57	P<0.01
	No	129	43.6	
Do You Believe That Natural Supplements Are Safe And Effective To Use For Weight Loss?	Yes	181	60.3	P<0.01
	No	39	13.2	
	Don't know	80	27	
Do You Believe That Natural Supplements For Weight Loss Are Better Than The Prescription Medicine?	Yes	192	64	P>0.01
	No	33	11.1	
	Don't know	75	25.3	
Do You Consider Natural Weight Loss Supplements As An Alternate To Diet And/Or Exercise?	Yes	114	38.5	P>0.01
	No	136	45.3	
	Don't know	50	16.9	
Possible Reasons For The Consumption Of Natural Weight Loss Supplements:	Health purpose	125	41.6	P<0.01
	An alternate to diet and/or exercise	62	20.6	
	Easy availability	37	12.3	
	Desire to use a natural remedy	57	19	
	Other	19	6.3	
Safety Concerns Associated With The Consumption Of	May cause harm	127	42.3	
	Drug -supplement interaction	33	11	

Natural Weight Loss Supplements:	Supplement-supplement interaction	26	8.6	P<0.01
	Disease-supplement interaction	20	6.6	
	Other	44	14.6	
	No safety concern	50	16.6	
Who Recommended You To Consume Natural Weight Loss Supplements?	Healthcare professional	32	10.9	P>0.01
	Friend	43	14.6	
	Relative	19	6.5	
	Other	18	6.1	
	No one	186	62	

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