

Apr 11th, 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Beliefs about Multi-Vitamin and Mineral Supplements in College-Aged Students – Differences Between Users and Non-Users

Ashton Armstrong
Louisiana Tech University

Leighann Myers
Louisiana Tech University

Taylor Thompson
Louisiana Tech University

Caleb Wilcox
Louisiana Tech University

Janet Pope
Louisiana Tech University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.latech.edu/ans-research-symposium>

Recommended Citation

Armstrong, Ashton; Myers, Leighann; Thompson, Taylor; Wilcox, Caleb; and Pope, Janet, "Beliefs about Multi-Vitamin and Mineral Supplements in College-Aged Students – Differences Between Users and Non-Users" (2019). *ANS Research Symposium*. 56.
<https://digitalcommons.latech.edu/ans-research-symposium/2019/poster-presentations/56>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences and Symposia at Louisiana Tech Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in ANS Research Symposium by an authorized administrator of Louisiana Tech Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@latech.edu.

Beliefs about Multi-Vitamin and Mineral Supplements in College-Aged Students – Differences Between Users and Non-Users

Ashton Armstrong¹, Leighann Myers¹, Taylor Thompson¹, Caleb Wilcox¹, Janet Pope, PhD, RD, LDN²

¹*Undergraduate student School of Human Ecology, Louisiana Tech University*

²*Associate Dean of Graduate and Undergraduate studies, Professor, School of Human Ecology, Louisiana Tech University*

This was one part of a larger study designed to examine beliefs about multi-vitamin and mineral (V&M) supplements in college students. Two hypotheses were tested: that there would be no significant difference in beliefs of those students who take V&M supplements and those who do not; and that weight status would not differ between users and non-users of V&M supplements. A convenience sample of 335 students from Louisiana Tech University completed a two-page questionnaire. Information collected included demographics; self reported weight status, exercise habits and interest in nutrition; and beliefs about 18 statements scored using a Likert scale, where 5 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree. Participants were between 18 and 25 years of age, with 44% being male. Only 23 students self-reported as underweight (7%), 243 reported having a normal weight (72%), and 69 self-reported as overweight (21%). About 39% (n = 130) reported current use of V&M supplements. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS, and hypotheses were tested using ANOVA and t-tests. Among users, 60% reported consuming V&M supplements for the purpose of immunity; 30% consumed them for physical appearance; 30% said they take them to complete their diets; 20% for physical performance enhancement; and 11% for weight loss management. Of the 205 nonusers, 197 (96%) said they would use V&M supplements if recommended by a physician, 171 (83%) if recommended by a nurse, 182 (88%) if recommended by a dietitian, and 140 (68%) if recommended by a coach. Users were significantly more inclined to believe that physical appearance ($4.26 + .62$ vs $3.95 + .82$, $p=.000$) and fatigue ($3.50 + .79$ vs $3.10 + .93$, $p=.000$) could be enhanced by the use of V&M supplements. The belief that V&M supplements contributed to weight loss or weight gain was not different between users and non-users. Other differences in beliefs between users and non-users included the idea that supplements are a waste of money ($1.84 + .68$ vs $2.61 + .92$, $p=.000$), supplements are needed only if you have a bad diet ($1.94 + .88$ vs $2.46 + .95$; $p=.000$), and college students are not at risk for a V&M deficiency ($1.62 + .77$ vs $1.89 + .8$; $p=.003$). Mean scores for most of the statements from both groups were close to 3 (neither agree nor disagree), suggesting a lack of certainty about the role of supplements. Results suggest a need for public education about vitamin and mineral supplements. Increased knowledge may impart a change in attitudes and beliefs among non-users. V&M supplements offer a plethora of health benefits. However, due to lack of regulation by the FDA, and a knowledge deficit in relation to supplements, misuse may be common.