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A new survey of health professionals indicates that the majority use dietary supplements at least occasionally, and that even more of them recommend supplements to their patients. As would be expected, the physicians most often recommended supplements that related to their medical specialty.

A SURVEY OF DIETARY SUPPLEMENT USE AMONG CARDIOLOGISTS, DERMATOLOGISTS AND ORTHOPEDISTS

Numerous reports have shown that the majority of the American population use dietary supplements. Dietary supplement usage is also known to be common among health professionals. A recent study analyzed the dietary supplement usage patterns within a population of health care professionals.

The "Life...supplemented" Healthcare Professionals 2008 Impact Study (HCP Impact Study) surveyed usage of dietary supplements by physicians in three specialties: cardiology, dermatology, and orthopedics. Respondents were 900 physicians, including 300 each from three specialties – cardiology, dermatology, and orthopedics.

Seventy-five percent of dermatologist said they use dietary supplements at least occasionally, as did 73% of orthopedists and 57% of cardiologists. Multivitamins were the most commonly used supplements, but more than 25% in each specialty claimed to use omega-3 fatty acids and over 20% said they used some botanical supplements. Consistent dietary supplement use was reported by 59% of dermatologists, 50% of orthopedists, and 37% of cardiologists. Ninety-one percent of orthopedists, 72% of cardiologists, and 66% of dermatologists said they recommended dietary supplement use to their patients. Cardiologists typically recommended dietary supplements for heart health or lowering cholesterol.

Fifty-seven percent of cardiologists said they use dietary supplements at least occasionally, as did 75% of dermatologists and 73% of orthopedists. The product most commonly reported to be used was a multivitamin, but over 25% in each specialty said they used omega-3 fatty acids and over 20% said they used some botanical supplements. Regular dietary supplement use was reported by 37% of cardiologists, 59% of dermatologists, and 50% of orthopedists. Seventy-two percent of cardiologists, 66% of dermatologists, and 91% of orthopedists reported recommending dietary supplements to their patients. The primary reason Cardiologists gave for recommending dietary sup-

plements to patients was for heart health or lowering cholesterol. The Dermatologists recommended supplements for benefits for skin, hair and nails, and Orthopedists for bone and joint health.

According to this survey, dietary supplement use was relatively common in this sample of physicians, and their dietary supplement recommendations tended to relate to their individual specialties.

Dickinson A, Shao A, Boyon N and Franco JC. Use of dietary supplements by cardiologists, dermatologists and orthopedists: report of a survey. Nutr J 2011 Mar 3;10:20.