Reviewer's report

Title: Dietary supplement users vary in attitudes and sources of dietary supplement information in East and West geographic regions: a cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 30 January 2013

Reviewer: Brenda Cartmel

Reviewer's report:

Major revisions:

1. As the focus of this paper is the comparison of supplement use between the East Coast participants and the West Coast participants, it would seem logical to exclude participants who have missing data for supplement use from all the analyses in the paper as these participants are uninformative, and their inclusion makes the results more difficult to interpret. For example in Table 1 the number of supplement users is 636, however the number for which tobacco use is reported is 646, presumably 10 of these participants have missing data on supplement use.

2. The inclusion of BMI, physical activity, alcohol use and tobacco help describe the populations of supplement and none supplement users. Thank you to the authors for including them. However the significant differences for most of these factors between East and West coast participants begs the question of whether the differences in these factors account for the significant difference in supplement use between the East and West coast participants, which is the focus of the paper. Conducting a multivariate analysis would enable the authors to determine the effect of geography independent of these other factors (e.g. smoking) which in the univariate analysis are associated supplement intake. Without multivariate analysis the reader is unclear as to the scientific significance of the geographic difference in supplement use that is reported. Multivariate analysis could also be conducted for the other outcomes presented in the paper.

Minor Essential Revisions:

3. Please check all totals included in column 1 of each of the tables as I have noted several errors. Table 1 Sex (n=588) the n should be 644, Table 3 Age Group (n=520) the n should be 620, Table 4 Geographic Location (n=543) n should be 643.


Discretionary Revisions:

5. In Tables 3 and 4 suggest adding a row for Supplement Use (Yes/No). It would be interesting to know if beliefs about the essentiality of supplements for health
and confidence in choosing appropriate supplementation differed by supplement use.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.