Reviewer's report

Title: Dietitians use and recommend dietary supplements: report of a survey

Version: 1 Date: 11 November 2011

Reviewer: Regan Bailey

Reviewer's report:

As the title implies, this was a survey-based report on the use of dietary supplements by registered dietitians (RDs) and also the recommendations that RDs provide to their clients. This is an interesting and informative report, and there have not been any recent publications of this type. The manuscript is well written. I have a few recommendations to enhance the manuscript.

Introduction

Please remove the sentence in line 98-99 or remove “Prominent nutrition researcher at Harvard” and replace with something else, this sounds like an advertisement. Similarly, lines 108-111 have the same feel – ODS sponsors many times of studies on various supplements, but I don’t think either of these sentences are necessary for your background.

You may want to indicate in the paragraph on lines 105-111 that these supplements are less frequently used but have a greater health concern because of product contamination and issues with product integrity and quality (this is not necessary though).

A transition is recommended between the paragraph ending on line 111 and the paragraph beginning on line 112.

Methods

I recommend reorganizing the methods, first describe the eRewards program, then the eligibility criteria and then proceed with the paragraphs in lines 126-144.

Is there a copy of this questionnaire that could be added to online files?

Were any amounts recorded?

Could the list of 31 reasons be bulleted or placed in a side bar?

Results

Were there any differences in reporting by the demographic characteristics presented in paragraph 188-195?

Why are there no statistics comparing your findings?

Table 1 is misleading, so 84% of the users? The title needs to be clear and
specific.

The results for the most part should be a summary of data in the tables – the first 3 paragraphs of the results are difficult to follow without a corresponding table or figure.

Line 216 – Again, almost 100% of RDs recommend dietary supplements? This seems extraordinarily high.

Table 2 isn’t necessary to make the points you are trying to make. I recommend deleted it, summarizing it and adding tables on the original data from this report.

Why is line 278-9 about LB important to the discussion of study findings?

Discussion

I think a more thoughtful approach could be taken to help the reader interpret these study findings instead of simply restating the results.

The limitations of the study have to be addressed to put this research in to context. This is not a representative survey of RDs, it is a convenience sample. How does that impact the results and interpretation are relevant.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.