



Advancing physical activity knowledge and participation
among Canadians living with spinal cord injury.

How many Canadians with SCI use dietary supplements?

Purpose

To figure out how many people with SCI use dietary supplements on a daily basis.

Summary:

- About half of Canadians with SCI use dietary supplements daily
- The most used supplements were: multivitamins, calcium & vitamin D.

Possible Applications

- Make sure you tell your physician about the dietary supplements you are taking to ensure you are taking the right types and doses for you.

Research Abstract

Dietary supplement use in the spinal cord injury population

Objectives: To determine the following: (1) prevalence of supplement use in a representative sample of the chronic spinal cord injury (SCI) population; (2) most frequently consumed supplements; and (3) characteristics of consistent supplement users.

Methods: A structured questionnaire was used to collect demographic information from 77 community-dwelling adults with chronic SCI (50.6% paraplegia, 81.8% male, 42.4±11.9 years, body mass index (BMI) 25.4±5.1 kg m⁻²). A standardized form was used to record dietary intake, including supplements, in the previous 24 h, at three time points (baseline, 6 months and 18 months). Logistic regression and multivariate logistic regression were used to determine which characteristic(s) was (were) associated with consistent supplement use.

Results: Seventy-one percent of the sample reported using supplements at least once, with 50.6% being classified as consistent supplement users (at least twice across the three time points). The top three supplements consumed were multivitamins (25%), calcium (20%) and vitamin D (16%). Supplement use status was not associated with gender, level of injury, age, education, physical activity, BMI, smoking or alcohol intake.

Conclusions: Dietary supplement use was common in our sample of individuals with long-standing SCI, but no common characteristics distinguished users from non-users. We suggest that health practitioners be aware of the high dietary supplement use in this population so that they can probe for type, dose and frequency, as supplements may have an important influence on dietary assessment results.

Opperman EA, Buchholz AC, Darlington GA, Martin Ginis KA, The SHAPE-SCI Research Group (2010). Dietary supplement use in the spinal cord injury population. *Spinal Cord*, 48, 60-64.