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Survey Reinforces Need for Further Understanding of Dietary Deficiencies and the Ability of Adults to Achieve Optimum Nutrition through Food Sources Alone

New data finds most adults believe their diets meet nutritional requirements, despite prevalence of diseases associated with deficiencies

September 8, 2015, New York, New York- Data from a three-country survey seeking to understand beliefs of adults on the role of diet for optimal health, as well as consumption of key micronutrients including Omega-3 and Vitamin D, will be published in the November/December issue of *Nutrition Today*. The survey of 3,000 American, British and German adults found that 72 percent reported having a “healthy” or “optimal” diet and more than half (52 percent) believed they consume all the key nutrients needed for optimal nutrition through food sources alone. However, the prevalence of chronic diseases in these countries suggests respondents may be overestimating how healthy their diets are. While research indicates that Omega-3s can provide a beneficial advantage for those predisposed to cardiovascular diseases¹, it remains the leading cause of death in the U.S., U.K. and Germany^{2,3}. The survey was commissioned by the Global Nutrition and Health Alliance (GNHA).

“Regardless of country, most consumers know optimal nutrition is important. A nutrient rich diet is the foundation for a healthy life,” said GNHA founding member Suzanne Steinbaum, DO, Director & Attending Cardiologist, Women and Heart Disease Center, Lenox Hill Hospital.

“Omega-3s are proven to be beneficial for cardiovascular health, as well as cognitive function,

¹ Tavazzi L, Maggioni AP, Marchioli R, et al; GISSI-HF Investigators. Effect of n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids in patients with chronic heart failure (the GISSI-HF trial): a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial. *Lancet*. 2008;372(9645):1223-1230

² CDC, NCHS. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2013 on [CDC WONDER Online Database](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/whr/codes/icd10u/underlying_cause_of_death_1999_2013.pdf), released 2015. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2013, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed March 31, 2015

³ World Health Organization. (2011) *Global status report on non-communicable diseases 2010*. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/ncd_report2010/en/ Accessed May 6, 2015

but far too often, people do not consume the amount needed for the greatest benefit. That is why I recommend all my patients take an Omega-3 supplement.”

In terms of supplementation of Omega-3 and Vitamin D, the survey also found that less than a third (32 percent) of those polled were actively taking a supplement.

“Preaching about proper diet is not enough. Perceptions of a healthy diet and the fact that it is very difficult to consume the recommended intake of nutrients such as Omega-3 and Vitamin D via diet alone, require us to rethink that approach,” said GNHA founding member Nigel Denby, RD, Head of Dietetics at Grub4Life in London. “Additional studies are needed to demonstrate the truth behind what people report they are consuming and what they really are eating. These types of studies would help further discussion about the role of vitamin and mineral supplementation as part of a healthy diet.”

Survey outcomes by country include:

Americans:

- 73% believe they have a “healthy” or “optimal” diet
- 81% realize Omega-3s are important to one’s health
- 65% aren’t sure if they are getting enough from their diet
- Only 45% regularly take an Omega-3 supplement
- Less than half (48%) consume enough Vitamin D via diet
- 62% take a Vitamin D supplement

British:

- 72% believe they have a “healthy” or “optimal” diet
- 72% realize Omega-3s are important to one’s health
- 23% aren’t sure if they are getting enough from their diet
- Only 29% regularly take an Omega-3 supplement
- Less than half (44%) consume enough Vitamin D via diet
- 32% take a Vitamin D supplement

Germans:

- 70% believe they have a “healthy” or “optimal” diet
- 80% realize Omega-3s are important to one’s health

- 34% aren't sure if they are getting enough from their diet
- Only 24% regularly take an Omega-3 supplement
- Less than half (42%) consume enough Vitamin D via diet
- 31% take a Vitamin D supplement

About the Survey

The Global Nutrition & Health Alliance survey was conducted by Instantly® (formerly uSamp), a marketing and research firm. The survey was conducted in December 2014 and included 3,030 consumers: 1,022 in the United States, 1,002 in Germany and 1,006 in the United Kingdom. Each consumer completed an online 10-minute questionnaire pertaining to their current diet and knowledge of vitamins, minerals and supplements, specifically Omega-3s and Vitamin D. The goal of the survey was to identify knowledge gaps to help inform educational materials and scientific studies to be developed by the GNHA.

Global Nutrition & Health Alliance

The Global Nutrition & Health Alliance is a global, multi-disciplinary group of physicians and nutrition experts working together to educate the public and professionals about optimal nutrition as part of a healthy lifestyle, including the contribution and interpretation of realistic and science-based recommendations on the appropriate use of vitamins and mineral supplements.

The Global Nutrition & Health Alliance is supported by an unrestricted grant from RB. For more details on the GNHA, visit www.globalnutritionhealth.org.

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