

## WHAT'S IN YOUR SUPPLEMENTS? EVEN THE EXPERTS ARE STUMPED

### *HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS CONFUSED ON ROLE, DEFINITION OF DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS*

Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind finds United States healthcare professionals hold clear misperceptions on differences between "over-the-counter" (OTC) and dietary supplement products in general, and more specifically in the omega-3 category – among the most popular dietary supplements sold in the United States today.

PublicMind data highlight cause for increased awareness by consumers using omega-3 dietary supplements, on the heels of New York Attorney General (NYAG), U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and U.S. Senator statements that herbal supplements may not contain key ingredients noted on their bottle labels. Earlier this month, four major retailers (GNC, Target, Walgreens and Wal-Mart) were cited by the NYAG as selling vitamins and supplements that did not contain the active ingredients listed on their labels.

"In light of recent reports on the actual content of dietary supplements sold at major retailers, it is important that healthcare professionals who may be confused about the appropriate use of dietary supplement omega-3 products take heed," said Rich Higginson, Director of Consumer Research at PublicMind.

The PublicMind survey, conducted across a randomly selected sample of 200 U.S. physicians and 150 U.S. pharmacists, showed that less than half (41%) of these professionals correctly stated that OTC products are regulated and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), while dietary supplement products are not.

Survey respondents demonstrated a number of additional misperceptions about the distinction between OTC and dietary supplement products, their appropriate use in patients, and clinical guidance regarding their use including a:

- ***Mistaken belief that FDA-approved "OTC" omega-3 products exist:*** Among those physicians and pharmacists who had recommended a non-prescription omega-3 product to patients, more than four in five (85%) believed incorrectly that they had recommended an FDA-approved OTC product.
- ***Mistaken belief that dietary supplements work similarly to prescription omega-3 products:*** 30% of pharmacists and 22% of physicians stated, incorrectly, that prescription and dietary supplement omega-3 products are similar in strength and content.

"Dietary supplements are not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for content, safety or manufacturing processes," said Higginson. "With confusion among health care professionals it is likely this may be even more confusing to patients. Consumers may not know that there are no OTC omega-3s – only supplements or prescription products."

## Methodology

The Fairleigh Dickinson University PublicMind poll, supported by Amarin Corporation, was an independent analysis of 350 U.S. healthcare professionals (including 200 physicians and 150 pharmacists). The study was conducted across the U.S. by telephone from February 20 through March 8, 2013.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>*

*Radio actualities at 201.692.2846*

*For more information, please call 201.692.7032*

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from February 20 through March 8, 2013, using a randomly selected sample of 200 physicians (including 150 primary care physicians (PCPs) and 50 cardiologists), and 150 pharmacists (including 75 employed by independent pharmacies and 75 by chain pharmacies), licensed and practicing across the United States.

PublicMind interviews are conducted by Opinion America of Cedar Knolls, NJ, with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing of physicians and pharmacists drawn from a targeted sample list obtained using list sources from InfoUSA and Medi-Pro. This technique gives every physician and pharmacist in these databases an equal chance of being selected.

**Table 1a: Professional Type:**

<i>Are you a...?</i>	
	<b>Total</b>
<b>Physician (Total)</b>	<b>200</b>
PCP	150
Cardiologist	50
<b>Pharmacist (Total)</b>	<b>150</b>
Chain	75
Independent	75

**Table 1: Recommend Dietary Supplements**

<i>In the past 12 months have you recommended any Dietary Supplements to any of your patients for abnormally high cholesterol or triglycerides</i>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Physician</b>	<b>Pharmacist</b>
Yes	68%	78%	55%
No	32%	22%	45%

**Table 2: Differences between Dietary Supplements and OTC Drugs (Top Responses Shown)**

<i>To the best of your knowledge, in general terms, what differences, if any, exist between Over-the-Counter drugs and Dietary Supplements? (Open Ended Question)</i>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Physician</b>	<b>Pharmacist</b>
Dietary Supplements are not regulated by FDA	24%	21%	28%
No Difference	11%	17%	2%
FDA regulates OTC drugs	10%	10%	9%
FDA approves OTC Drugs	7%	4%	11%
Dietary supplements may not make health claims	4%	5%	4%
Don't Know	14%	14%	15%

**Table 3: Have Patients Requested Non-Prescription Omega 3**

<i>In the past 12 months, have any of your patients with abnormal cholesterol and/or abnormally high triglycerides indicated a desire to take non-prescription Omega-3?</i>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Physician</b>	<b>Pharmacist</b>
Yes	83%	87%	77%
No	17%	13%	23%

**Table 4: Do You Typically Recommend Non-Prescription Omega 3**

<i>And in those instances do you typically recommend a non-prescription Omega-3, or not?</i>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Physician</b>	<b>Pharmacist</b>
Yes	82%	77%	89%
No	18%	23%	11%

**Table 5: Ever Recommended Non-Prescription Omega 3 (Asked of those Saying 'No' Above)**

<i>In the past 12 months have you recommended the use of a non-prescription Omega-3 to any of your patients for their abnormally high triglycerides?</i>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Physician</b>	<b>Pharmacist</b>
Yes	43%	45%	40%
No	57%	55%	60%

**Table 6: Type of Omega-3 Recommended**

<i>Would that have been an over-the-counter Omega-3 product, a dietary supplement Omega-3, or both?</i>			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Physician</b>	<b>Pharmacist</b>
OTC	61%	50%	79%
Dietary Supplement	14%	17%	11%
Both	24%	33%	11%

**Table 7: Type of Omega-3 Recommended**

And are non-prescription Omega-3s similar in strength and content to prescription Omega-3s?			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Physician</b>	<b>Pharmacist</b>
Yes	25%	22%	30%
No	62%	62%	62%
Not Sure	12%	16%	8%

**Exact Question Wording**

**Introduction and Screening Questions Not Included in Release**

Q1. First, we have you listed as a (INSERT TYPE), is that correct?

Primary Care Physician	1	<b>CONTINUE</b>
Cardiologist	2	
Pharmacist ( <b>Ask if Chain or Independent</b> )	3	
If Other , TERMINATE	4	

**Q2 Not Included in Release**

Q3. In the past 12 months have you recommended any Dietary Supplements to any of your patients for abnormally high cholesterol or triglycerides?

- Yes
- No

Q4. To the best of your knowledge, in general terms, what differences, if any, exist between Over-the-Counter drugs and Dietary Supplements? (**DO NOT READ PRE-CODES**)

- FDA regulates Over-the-Counter drugs
- FDA approves Over-the-Counter Drugs
- Dietary Supplements are not regulated by FDA
- Dietary Supplements are not used to treat disease
- Dietary supplements may not make health claims
- Other (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- Don't Know

**Q5-7 Not Included in Release**

Q8. In the past 12 months, have any of your patients with abnormal cholesterol and/or abnormally high triglycerides indicated a desire to take non-prescription Omega-3?

- Yes
- No (**SKIP TO Q10**)

Q9. And in those instances do you typically recommend a non-prescription Omega-3, or not?

- Recommend
- Do Not Recommend

Q10. In the past 12 months have you recommended the use of a non-prescription Omega-3 to any of your patients for their abnormally high triglycerides?

Yes

No (**SKIP TO Q13**)

Q10a. Would that have been an over-the-counter Omega-3 product, a dietary supplement Omega-3, or both?

OTC

Dietary Supplement

Both

**Q11-14 Not Included in Release**

Q 15. And are non-prescription Omega-3s similar in strength and content to prescription Omega-3s?

Yes

No

Unsure

**Q16-25 Not Included in Release**

Thank you very much for time and input today, those are all my questions. Once again, I would like to assure you that all your responses will remain confidential.