

## **HKHFA & HKU Social Sciences Research Centre announce**

### **“Hong Kong Public Knowledge of Health Supplements” survey findings**

HKU Social Sciences Research Centre was commissioned by Association to conduct two territory-wide telephone surveys in 2008 and 2014. The study was designed to measure the knowledge of the general public about health supplements in Hong Kong. The target respondents were Hong Kong residents aged 18 or above. The previous survey conducted in September 2008 acts as the baseline for comparison with this survey in August 2014. Fieldwork took place between August 7 and August 29, 2014 through telephone survey, and a total of 1,053 successful interviews was achieved. The response rate was 70.2%. The objectives of this survey are to understand the general public's health food intake and opinion about nutrition labels.

#### Behavior of health food intake

This survey observes that about 44.7% of the respondents took a health food supplement during the six months prior to the survey. Those with monthly household income above \$20,000 were more likely to take a health food supplement during the six months prior to the survey. Compared to the previous survey in 2008, a higher proportion of respondents took a health food supplement during the six months prior to the survey. Regarding the type of health food supplement the respondents took, the most common type of health food supplement that they took was vitamins or minerals (44.0%), followed by proprietary Chinese supplements (22.5%), omega series (17.8%) and western herbs and other (15.7%). The most common benefits of the health food supplement they took was "Better health" (29.5%) and "Bone and Joint" (25.1%), while 10.6% and 8.6% of respondents reported that the benefits were "No benefits" and "Don't know" respectively. Projected to the adult resident population of Hong Kong, there are 2,783,000 adults who took a health food supplement during the six months prior to the survey in Hong Kong.

#### Channels to obtain and average spending on health food supplements

In terms of health food supplement purchasing, more than three fifths (35.4%) of the respondents reported that they purchased vitamins or materials during the six months prior to the survey, followed by proprietary Chinese supplements (19.8%), omega series (15.1%) and western herbs and other (14.0%). Among those types of health food supplement which respondents purchased in the previous four weeks, spending on proprietary Chinese supplements was highest, with average monthly spending of \$667.2, followed by western herbs and other (\$406.7), omega series (\$396.8) and vitamins or minerals (\$390.2). Among those respondents who purchased health food supplements during six months prior to the survey, most of them purchased from chain-stories, relatively fewer respondents purchased from a pharmacy or through direct selling.

Based on the reported purchases of health supplements in this survey, Hong Kong spent \$19 billion to purchase health supplements per year, which is an increase of about 90% compared to \$10 billion in 2008 from the previous survey. Increase in the Consumer Price Index [1] and the number of adults who use health supplements [2] increase explain some of the increase in spending.

#### Opinion about "1+7" nutrition labelling scheme

Over half (51.7%) of respondents reported that the "1+7" nutrition labelling scheme currently used in Hong Kong can help them choose a suitable health supplement. But at the same time, there are 51.4% of respondents who reported that "1+7" nutrition labelling scheme cannot accurately reflect the benefits of the health supplement and only one fifth (20.9%) of respondents changed their decision to purchase due to "1+7" nutrition labelling scheme.

#### Opinion about regulate health supplements and conventional food separately

Over nine tenths (93.8%) of respondents agree that government should regulate health supplements and conventional food separately. When compared to the previous survey in 2008, a higher proportion of respondents reported that they strongly agree in this year survey. For the suggestion of establishing a different labelling scheme, more than three tenths (31.7%) of respondents stated that "Ingredients" is needed, other information includes "Indications" (19.0%) and "Potential side effects" (14.0%), etc.

Notes:

[1] CPI increase 20% from 2008 to 2014.

[2] No of adult intake health supplement increase 37% from 2008 to 2014.

**\*Key messages from HKHFA are:**

- 1) Expanding health food market signifying importance of health food industry;
- 2) independent regulation for health food is required and
- 3) Government must seek industry consultation for implementation of any health food related policies and we quoted "1+7" labelling as an inappropriate measure for health food.

## 香港保健食品協會及香港大學社會科學研究中心發布「港人對保健食品的認知」 調查結果

香港大學社會科學研究中心分別於 2008 年及 2014 年受香港保健食品協會委託進行了全港性的電話調查。

香港大學社會科學研究中心發布「港人對保健食品的認知」調查結果

研究旨在評估公眾對香港保健食品的認知。對象為年滿十八歲的香港市民。上一次的調查於 2008 年 9 月進行，並作為 2014 年 8 月進行的調查之基準，以進行比較。是次調查於 2014 年 8 月 7 日至 29 日以電話訪問形式進行，並成功訪問了 1,053 位被訪者。整體回應率為 70.2%。是次調查目的是要了解現時公眾服用保健食品的情況與對相關標籤制度的意見。

### 服用保健食品的習慣

調查發現，約四成半 (44.7%) 的被訪者在訪問前六個月內有服用過健康補充品，當中以每月個人收入 \$20,000 以上的被訪者有較多表示在訪問前六個月內有服用過健康補充品。與 2008 年相比，本調查的被訪者有較高比例在訪問前六個月內有服用過健康補充品。就被訪者服用健康補充品的種類，維他命或礦物最為普遍 (44.0%)，其次是中式保健品 (22.5%)、奧米加系列 (17.8%) 及西式保健品 (15.7%)。而所服用健康補充品的功效主要為更健康 (29.5%) 及骨骼和關節 (25.1%)，但值得注意的是分別有 10.6% 及 8.6% 的被訪者表示其服用的健康補充品沒有好處或不知道其功效。根據推算，本港約有 2,783,000 成年人口在訪問前六個月內有服用過健康補充品。

### 獲得保健食品的途徑及平均消費

就購買健康補充品，逾三成五 (35.4%) 的被訪者表示在訪問前六個月內有購買過維他命或礦物，其次是中式保健品 (19.8%)、奧米加系列 (15.1%) 及西式保健品 (14.0%)。被訪者花費在各種健康補充品中，以中式保健品為最高，每四星期平均花費為 \$667.2，其次是西式保健品 (\$406.7)、奧米加系列 (\$396.8) 及維他命及礦物 (\$390.2)。在訪問前六個月內有購買過保健食品的被訪者中，他們大部份是在連鎖商店購買，相對較少的被訪者在藥房或透過直銷購買。根據推算，本港每年花費在購買健康補充品的總金額約為 190 億港圓，比 2008 年的 100 億增加約 90%。消費物價指數 [1] 上升及服用健康補充品的成年人口 [2] 增加能解釋部分導致花費總金額上升的原因。

## 「1+7」營養標籤制度的意見

逾五成 (51.7%) 的被訪者表示對於現時在香港實行的「1+7」營養標籤制度能夠幫助他們選擇合適健康補充品。但同時有 51.4% 的被訪者表示「1+7」營養標籤未能精確反映健康補充品的功效及只有兩成 (20.9%) 的被訪者因「1+7」營養標籤而改變購買決定。

### 監管健康補充品及一般食品的意見

超過九成 (93.8%) 的被訪者對政府應將健康補充品跟一般食品分開監管表示同意。而與 2008 年相比，本年調查有較高比例的被訪者表示非常同意。在建議設立另外一個不同的標籤制度方面，有逾三成 (31.7%) 的被訪者表示應加入成份與處方的資料、其他應加入的資料包括「效能與功效」(19.0%) 及「可能出能的副作用」(14.0%) 等。

註:

[1] 消費物價指數由 2008 年至 2014 年上升約 20%。

[2] 服用健康補充品的人口由 2008 年至 2014 年增加約 37%。

### 協會訊息:

1. 保健品市場不斷擴大，意味著保健品行業的重要性;
2. 為保健品而設的法規是必需的;
3. 政府必須向保健品行業諮詢任何實施有關保健品的政策，以及“1+7”標籤其實不適用於保健品。