



**Public Meeting for Oral Testimony on the Scientific Report of the
2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee**

Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Oral Testimony by Haiuyen Nguyen, CRN

Good morning. CRN submitted comments throughout the DGAC process providing support for the use of multivitamins and minerals as a no calorie, low cost, and convenient way to help Americans get RDA amounts of nutrients when this need is not met through food. In particular, multivitamins and minerals can help reduce nutrient shortfalls identified by the Committee, especially considering the majority of the U.S. population do not eat enough vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and dairy to increase intake of shortfall nutrients, which include vitamins A, D, E, and C, folate, calcium, magnesium, fiber and potassium. CRN agrees with the Advisory Report¹ that dietary supplements containing RDA levels of nutrients are safe and that use of products with doses exceeding the UL should be discussed with a health care provider. In fact, the majority of Americans are judicious about taking high dose supplements. A recent CRN survey indicates that 82 percent of adults believe that high dose, single nutrient supplementation should be discussed with a physician².

Multivitamins can support adequate nutrient intake, but are not meant to replace a healthy diet. Our survey data indicate that over 80% of adults agree that multivitamins should not be

¹ Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. Available at: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015-scientific-report/PDFs/Scientific-Report-of-the-2015-Dietary-Guidelines-Advisory-Committee.pdf>.

² The Council for Responsible Nutrition funded a survey to measure consumer attitudes about the role of multivitamins, calcium and/or vitamin D supplements, and other supplements in improving dietary intakes. The research was designed and analyzed by FoodMinds and was fielded October 10-14, 2014, using Toluna's On-line Omnibus. The weighted sample of 2,159 respondents is representative of U.S. adults.

used to replace healthy habits. And nearly 90% agree that multivitamins can help to meet nutrient needs when these needs cannot be met through food alone². Consumers also understand that dietary supplements are just one part of a healthy lifestyle, reporting that “overall health and wellness” and “to fill nutrient gaps” as the top two reasons for using supplements³. Data show that supplement users are more likely than non-supplement users to try to eat a healthy diet, engage in regular physical activity, and not smoke⁴.

The Committee designated calcium and vitamin D as nutrients of public health concern for underconsumption. We believe that calcium and vitamin D supplements at RDA levels can be safely used by Americans to achieve adequate intake. As stated in the Advisory Report, calcium and vitamin D supplements do not contribute to health concerns associated with overconsumption of these nutrients.

The safety of calcium supplementation has been reinforced in recent studies, which do not show effects on adverse cardiovascular outcomes or total mortality^{5,6,7,8,9}. We agree with the Advisory Report and medical authorities that supplementation with vitamin D is one strategy to increase intake to RDA or higher levels. In light of the drastic underconsumption of calcium and

³ Dickinson A, Blatman J, El-Dash N, Franco JC. Consumer usage and reasons for using dietary supplements: report of a series of surveys. *J Am Coll Nutr.* 2014;33:176-182.

⁴ Dickinson A, MacKay D. Health Habits and other characteristics of dietary supplement users: a review. *Nutr J.* 2014;13:14.

⁵ Heaney RP, Kopecky S, Maki KC, et al. A review of calcium supplements and cardiovascular disease risk. *Adv Nutr.* 2012;3:763-771.

⁶ Prentice RL, Pettinger MB, Jackson RD, et al. Health risks and benefits from calcium and vitamin D supplementation: Women's Health Initiative clinical trial and cohort study. *Osteoporos Int.* 2013;24:567-580.

⁷ Langsetmo L, Berger C, Kreiger N, et al. Calcium and vitamin D intake and mortality: results from the Canadian Multicentre Osteoporosis Study (CaMos). *J Clin Endocrinol Metab.* 2013;98:3010-8.

⁸ Paik JM, Curhan GC, Sun Q, et al. Calcium supplement intake and risk of cardiovascular disease in women. *Osteoporos Int.* 2014;25:2047-56.

⁹ Lewis JR, Radavelli-Bagatini S, Rejnmark L, et al. The effects of calcium supplementation on verified coronary heart disease hospitalization and death in postmenopausal women: a collaborative meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *J Bone Miner Res.* 2015;30:165-75.

vitamin D and the benefits these nutrients provide, we urge you to consider the following recommendation statement:

“Americans who do not consume the recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D through food sources should consider a calcium and vitamin D supplement to help support bone health.”

Our survey data indicate that nearly 90 percent of consumers consider this statement easy to understand and nearly 75 percent see the statement as a relevant and an important reminder for health².

Thank you for this opportunity. CRN will provide thorough written comments in the coming weeks.