

# **Evaluation of Dietary Supplements Use: A Cross-sectional Study among Palestinians**

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## ***Abstract:***

**Objectives:** The aims of this study were to evaluate the prevalence, reasons for use and types of dietary supplements among Palestinians.

**Method:** The study was a questionnaire – based cross sectional study that was conducted between February and March 2021, the sample was a convenient sample,

**Results:** A total of 400 questionnaires were filled, 349 (87.3%) were females. Among them a total of 353 (88.3%) of participants were taking supplements and 254 (63.5%) of them used supplements within the past three months. Supplements were most commonly used for hair and nails growth (32.1%), followed by (31.7%) for immune system support, (14.4%) for anemia, (22.4%) for general weakness, (20.5%) for bone and joint pain and (17.3%) for pregnancy support. A total of (92.0%) of participants reported that the pharmacies were their primary source of

supplements, with only (3.5%) were relying on internet sources. The most commonly used supplements by Palestinians were vitamin B12 (42.7%), vitamin C (41.9%), iron- containing supplements (37.6%), vitamin D (37.3%) and multivitamins (30.4%). most of the participants (65.5%) used vitamin C and zinc (49%) in the past three months, and more than half of them (71.9%) and (58.97%) used the two supplements respectively to support immunity.

**Conclusion:** Prevalence of dietary supplement use is high among Palestinians. The most common used one was vitamin B12, also a high number of participants took vitamin c and zinc supplements, more than half of the participants used them within the past three months, the main source of supplement is community pharmacies. Although most of the supplement use based on pharmacist advice or medical prescription, there is a need to educate the people to ensure safe practices, because many supplements can result in serious side effects. A better counseling is recommended by the pharmacists to increase awareness for community people about the appropriate supplement that fit the patient situation, and the potential side effects of self-medicate with supplements.