

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**ASSOCIATION OF NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPLEMENT
INTAKE AMONG GYM GOERS IN PUNCAK ALAM, SELANGOR.**

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ABSTRACT

The rise in dietary supplement use among gym-goers has become a growing public health interest, particularly given the increasing influence of social media, marketing, and peer-driven information. This study aimed to investigate the association between nutritional knowledge and supplement intake among gym-goers in Puncak Alam, Selangor. Employing a cross-sectional design, 148 participants from six local gymnasiums were recruited through convenience sampling. Data were collected via validated self-administered questionnaires assessing socio-demographics, nutritional knowledge, supplement consumption patterns, and perceptions of dietary supplements. Results revealed that while 80.4% of participants reported consuming at least one dietary supplement, only 37.8% demonstrated high nutritional knowledge. Multivitamins, vitamin C, and protein-based products were among the most commonly consumed supplements. The primary motivations for use included general health maintenance, muscle gain, and physical performance enhancement. Despite these patterns, statistical analyses—including Spearman's correlation and Mann–Whitney U tests—demonstrated no significant relationship between nutritional knowledge and the number of supplements consumed ($p > 0.05$), highlighting a notable knowledge-practice gap. Many respondents relied on non-professional sources such as social media, peers, and online platforms for supplement information, rather than consulting healthcare professionals. These findings underscore a critical disconnect between knowledge and behavior, where supplement use appears largely influenced by external perceptions rather than evidence-based understanding. The study recommends targeted educational interventions to bridge this gap, improve nutritional literacy, and promote safe, informed supplement practices among fitness enthusiasts. Such efforts are crucial for minimizing health risks and fostering a more responsible supplement culture within Malaysia's gym-going population.

Keywords: nutritional knowledge, supplement intake, dietary supplement, gym-goers, Puncak Alam

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

A balanced diet and regular physical exercise are essential for good health. In addition, sport, physical exercise, and an active lifestyle, along with healthy food consumption patterns are fundamental in maintaining a state of well-being by reducing the risk of obesity and the occurrence of other comorbidities (Romana, 2015; Miragaia, 2021). A study by Farhud (2015) indicates that maintaining a nutritious diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can significantly reduce the risk of chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular issues. Regular exercise not only helps in weight management but also enhances mental health by reducing stress and anxiety levels. Furthermore, adequate sleep is crucial for physical recovery and cognitive function. Ultimately, adopting a healthy lifestyle promotes not only physical health but also emotional resilience and social well-being, leading to a more fulfilling life.

Rattan and Kaur (2022) define nutrition as the macro- and micro-nutrients essential for survival, we do not simply eat nutrition, which could, in principle, be done in the form of a pill. Instead, we eat food which normally originates from animal- and plant-based sources, without us being aware of or conscious of its nutritional value. Essential nutrients, such as carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water, are vital for growth, development, and overall health (Gropper, Smith, & Gropper, 2018). A well-balanced diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats, is an example of good nutrition. Adequate nutrient intake provides the energy needed for intense exercise, promotes muscle growth and repair, and enhances athletic performance. Moreover, a nutritious diet contributes to improving overall mental and physical health by providing the necessary nutrients that support brain function and reduce the risk of chronic diseases (Munteanu & Schwartz, 2022). Lastly, knowledge of nutrition