

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**A STUDY OF USE, ATTITUDE AND
KNOWLEDGE OF HEALTH SUPPLEMENT
AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN IN SHAH ALAM**

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ABSTRACTS

Use of health supplements among pregnant women is extremely fashionable even though there is very little real evidence of safety and efficacy of these substances. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess Malaysian pregnant women regarding their use of health supplements and rationale for use. This study also sought to clarify this population's attitudes towards supplementation and to assess knowledge of pregnant women about health supplements and the safety of these substances. 250 pregnant women aged 18 years and older at Klinik Kesihatan Shah Alam were interviewed using a structured questionnaire between September and November 2011. Of the 250 participants, 167 (66.8%) reported having used health supplement during their current pregnancy, most commonly products included folic acid, prenatal vitamins, vitamin C, calcium and evening primrose oil. The most common reasons for taking health supplement was desired to have a healthy baby (52%>), to feel much healthier (37.6%>) and to improve energy and vitality (37.2%). Health supplements consumption mainly occur during the first trimester (39%>). More than half respondents showed a moderate knowledge of health supplements (56.8%o). The most referenced sources were the magazine/newspaper or books and internet with 13.5% and 11.7% respectively. 40% of respondents believed that supplements were more safer than prescribed medicines and 44.8% claimed that it is equally effective as prescription medications. Overall, participants showed likely more negative attitudes (51.6%) towards the use of health supplements. Nearly more than 90%) participants reported that they had ever heard about folic acid in their life. To add, findings of this study might be useful to be used for future health promotional campaigns.