

The influence of pharmacist counseling on users when choosing dietary supplements that contribute to the normal function of the immune system

Jelena M. Čanji Panić¹, Nemanja B. Todorović¹, Milica D. Randelović¹, Milica M. Perin¹, Milana M. Vuković¹, Dunja M. Vesković^{2,3}, Katarina S. Otašević⁴, Mladena N. Lalić-Popović^{1,5}

¹University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Medicine Novi Sad, Department of Pharmacy, Novi Sad, Serbia

²University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Medicine Novi Sad, Department of Dermatovenerology Diseases, Novi Sad, Serbia

³Clinical Center of Vojvodina, Clinic of Dermatovenerology Diseases, Novi Sad, Serbia

⁴University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Medicine Novi Sad, Department of Dental Medicine, Novi Sad, Serbia

⁵University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Medicine Novi Sad, Centre for Medical and Pharmaceutical Investigations and Quality Control (CEMPhIC), Novi Sad, Serbia

The corona virus pandemic has led to an increase in the consumption of numerous medicines and dietary supplements. Intensive marketing, great availability and counseling by health workers contribute to the increase in the consumption of dietary supplements that affect the immune system. The goal of this study was to determine how much influence pharmacists have on users when choosing a supplement that contributes to the normal function of the immune system.

In order to collect information on what users rely on the most when choosing dietary supplements that affect the immune system, a survey was designed in the form of short questionnaire. One hundred users of the "Benu" pharmacy in Novi Sad were surveyed.



Graph 1. The percentage of users affected by a certain factor when choosing a dietary supplement that affects the immune system

The results of the survey showed that 13% of users, when choosing dietary supplement that affects the immune system, decide on the supplement that was recommended to them by an acquaintance, in 19% of them the price is a decisive factor, 5% of them choose the supplement that they have seen on an advertisement, while 63% of users make their decision based on the pharmacist's advice. A number of users mentioned that sometimes they were unable to follow the pharmacist's advice, because they couldn't afford the recommended dietary supplement.

Due to potential interactions with medicines, as well as the possibility of manifestation of toxic effects, supplements that affect the immune system should only be applied when their use is indicated, with the recommendation of pharmacists, who are trained to provide the users with all the necessary information on how to choose the right supplement. The results of the survey have shown that the largest number of users trust the pharmacists and make a decision based on their advice. Therefore, the pharmacist should make an effort to recommend the appropriate supplement and provide necessary information for its proper use.

Acknowledgement: This study was supported by The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Republic of Serbia grant 451-03-68/2022-14/200114.



CEMFIK

