

**Impact of Family Size on the Relationship between Social Influences and Dietary Supplement Usage among Taiwanese**

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**Aim:** Previous research has shown inconsistent results regarding the impact of social influences on dietary behavior. The purpose of this study was to investigate if an individual's immediate social environment, the size of family, plays a role in the relationship between different types of social influences and supplement usage among Taiwanese.

**Methods:** Study participants were employees of three large companies. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to measure their dietary supplement use and eleven psychosocial factors.

**Results:** Among 533 valid returned questionnaires (response rate=77.8%), people with 1-4 family members ( $n=256$ ) were more likely to take supplements than people with 5 or more family members ( $n=253$ ) (64.8% vs. 53.4%,  $p<.01$ ), and reported more frequent uses of multivitamins/minerals (26.2% vs. 18.6%,  $p<.05$ ), special foods prepared with Chinese herbs (16.0% vs. 9.9%,  $p<.05$ ), and vitamin B12 (4.3% vs. 1.2%,  $p<.05$ ). Stepwise discriminant analyses showed that the most important psychosocial factors in determining whether or not people used dietary supplements were social modeling ( $p<.0001$ ) and perceived benefits ( $p<.0001$ ) for those with smaller family sizes, and normative beliefs ( $p<.0001$ ) and overall health concern ( $p<.0001$ ) for those with larger family sizes.

**Conclusion:** The hypothesis that an individual's immediate social environment plays a role in the relationship between social influences and dietary behavior might be further examined in other cultures.