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THE ROLE OF MULTIVITAMIN/MULTI-MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS IN SUPPORTING HUMAN HEALTH: AN OVERVIEW OF POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Komal Nigam*, Shefali Agrahari
S. N. College of Pharmacy Babupur Lakhauwa Bazar Jaunpur

ABSTRACT

Vitamins and minerals, or micronutrients, are necessary for a wide range of physiological processes, such as neurometabolic control, immunological response, antioxidant defense, and enzyme activity. Multivitamin/multimineral (MVM) supplements are increasingly being used to improve general health and close alleged dietary shortfalls. In this overview, the data supporting the possible advantages of MVM supplements is examined. These benefits include boosting micronutrient status, supporting cognitive health, enhancing immunological and metabolic processes, improving mother and child health, and potentially lowering the risk of certain chronic illnesses. According to evidence, in those with higher demands or insufficient nutritional consumption (such as pregnant women, older persons, and those following restricted diets), MVM supplementation has the potential to significantly enhance immune-related outcomes, cognitive function, and nutritional biomarkers. Large-scale studies conducted on populations that are generally healthy and well-nourished, however, reveal little to no effect for significant outcomes like death or cardiovascular disease. Consequently, MVM supplements are not a replacement for a nutrient-rich diet and healthy lifestyle, even though they might be a helpful adjunct in certain situations. Future studies should identify the people that benefit the most, as well as the best formulations, dosages, timings, and long-term impacts.

INTRODUCTION

Minerals and vitamins are essential micronutrients that are essential for sustaining human health. They promote immunological and neurological processes, act as cofactors for enzymatic activities, control gene expression and cell signaling, aid in the management of oxidative stress, and aid in tissue construction and repair. Even if there is an abundance of food in many places, studies frequently show that people are not getting enough of some micronutrients because of a lack of dietary diversity, restrictive eating habits (vegan or vegetarian), food processing, malabsorption, aging, disease, or higher physiological demands.

. As a practical "insurance policy" to help address nutrient shortages, multivitamin/multimineral (MVM) supplements—which include combinations of vitamins A, B-complex, C, D, E, and K as well as minerals like iron, zinc, selenium, magnesium, and calcium—have become more and more popular. In many nations, adult usage rates are high.

The primary queries still stand, though: What are the actual advantages of MVM supplements? Which demographics benefit from them the most? What are their possible drawbacks and hazards? The objectives of this overview are to (a) provide a summary of the possible health advantages of MVM supplementation, (b) assess the quality of the available scientific data, and (c) draw attention to factors that should be taken into account when using them in relation to food and lifestyle.

OVERVIEW OF POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF MULTIVITAMIN/MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS

Below we outline key benefit domains, summarising evidence and caveats.

1. **Improvement of Micronutrient Status**
   • A daily multivitamin/mineral supplement markedly raised plasma concentrations of vitamins D, E, B6 (pyridoxal phosphate), folate, B12, and C in older persons who were eating a fortified diet.
   • Multivitamin/multimineral use (≥ 16 days/month) was linked to enhanced biomarkers for folate, iodine, selenium, and vitamins B6, B12, and D, as well as a lower prevalence of deficiencies in U.S. people aged 51 and older.
   • These results imply that MVM supplementation can significantly enhance micronutrient status in people with poor consumption or elevated requirements (e.g., older age, restricted diet).
2. **Immune Function and Infection Resistance**
   A multivitamin and mineral supplement decreased the self-reported incidence of infection and absenteeism in a cohort of people with type 2 diabetes (a condition with a high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies) when compared to a placebo.
   • MVM supplementation enhanced vitamin C and zinc levels as well as self-reported health status in healthy older persons

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(≥55 years), while a 12-week experiment did not reveal any improvements in functional immunological markers.
• A poll of medical professionals revealed that many believe multivitamin/multimineral pills can aid with immunity support, energy enhancement, fatigue reduction, and acute sickness recovery.
• **Caution**: Supplementation is supportive rather than a guarantee of protection; there is a lack of direct, strong evidence (hard objectives like decreased infection rates or immunological illness incidence).

3. **Energy Metabolism and Vitalit**
   • MVMs may improve the mood of people with low nutritional status because many of the B-complex vitamins and minerals are co-factors in metabolic pathways that turn macronutrients into energy (e.g., greater energy, less weariness).
   • According to certain research, MVM users experience subjective increases in vitality, energy, and mood.
   • Note: There is little objective clinical proof for these results, which are frequently self-reported and susceptible to placebo effects.
4. **Cognitive Health and Ageing-Related Decline**
   • In comparison to a placebo, daily multivitamin supplementation enhanced immediate-recall memory at one year and over three years of follow-up, according to a randomized clinical study including 3,562 older persons (effect comparable to about three years of age-related memory change).
   The As a result, older persons who take multivitamin supplements may have mild improvements in episodic memory.
   • Note: The study did not show a significant improvement in other cognitive domains, such as executive or new object recognition, and the effect sizes are minor. Older individuals did not benefit from several previous experiments.
   • People with deficiencies or higher risks may benefit more.
5. **Maternal, Fetal and Childhood Health**
   • While some prenatal multivitamin regimens (such as folic acid, iron, and iodine) are considered standard of care, generic adult multivitamins might not be as effective.
   • Although not all multivitamins are designed for pregnancy, multivitamin supplements assist women of reproductive age achieve appropriate micronutrient consumption throughout conception and pregnancy, potentially lowering the risk of birth abnormalities, low birth weight, and maternal anemia.
   • Note: Pregnancy-specific formulations should be used instead of generic adult multivitamins; more study is required to distinguish the benefits of MVM from specialized micronutrient interventions.
6. **Potential Chronic Disease Prevention (Cancer, Cardiovascular Disease, Mortality)**
   • A daily multivitamin (Centrum Silver) was shown to have no meaningful effect on major cardiovascular events or cardiovascular mortality, but it did modestly lower the incidence of total cancer in male doctors (n = 14,641) in the doctors' Health Study II (PHS II), a large randomized controlled study.
   • MVM supplementation had no effect on vascular/cancer mortality or all-cause mortality (RR 0.98; 95% CI 0.94–1.02), according to a meta-analysis of 21 randomized studies with 91,074 participants.
   • There was no mortality benefit linked to daily multivitamin usage in a very large prospective cohort trial of 390,124 healthy people over a period of more than 20 years.
   • Caution: Supplements should not be used in place of diet, exercise, quitting smoking, or other lifestyle changes because the evidence for their ability to prevent major chronic illnesses is limited.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS & LIMITATIONS

• A diet rich in nutrients and well-balanced cannot be replaced by MVMs. Nutrient, fiber, phytochemical, and synergistic matrices found in foods are complex and cannot be replicated by standalone supplements.
• The greatest benefit is shown in people that have a history of micronutrient deficiencies or insufficiencies, or are at risk for developing one (older age, limited diet, malabsorption, pregnancy, chronic disease). In healthy people, the extra advantage is probably negligible.
• Quality of dose, bioavailability, and scientific validation; the name "multivitamin" encompasses a wide range of products of vastly differing quality; over-supplementation and nutrient toxicity are conceivable (particularly with regard to fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K or minerals like iron).
The Although biomarkers and subjective health have improved in many studies, objective clinical endpoints like mortality and severe illness incidence frequently show little change.
• Confounding: Because many MVM users already lead better lifestyles, observational studies may overestimate the benefits.

CONCLUSION

Supplements containing many vitamins and minerals can be beneficial to human health, especially for those who may be at risk for inadequate consumption of certain micronutrients or for those who require more of them (pregnancy, older adults, and those following restrictive diets). They bridge dietary gaps, enhance nutritional biomarkers, and may boost immunological, metabolic, and cognitive

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health in some populations. MVMs do not, however, take the place of the fundamental significance of a diverse diet, regular exercise, enough sleep, and other healthy lifestyle behaviors. The data supporting the prevention of major diseases (such as cardiovascular disease and mortality) is also inadequate. The choice to utilize an MVM supplement should really be made on an individual basis. This includes evaluating food consumption, nutritional status (where indicated), health condition, lifestyle, and particular needs. When necessary, a healthcare expert should be consulted in order to select a reliable, high-quality product.

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