



TITLE: Sports supplements: use, knowledge, and risks for Algerian athletes

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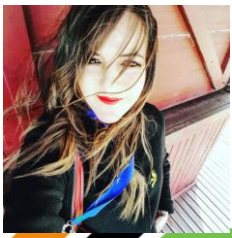
ABSTRACT

In recent years, sports nutrition has become an integral part of athletes' lifestyles. However, Algeria lags behind in this field compared to several other countries. This primary study in Algeria aimed to investigate the prevalence of sports supplement usage among recreational and professional athletes. Additionally, it aimed to assess the associated health risks and examine athletes' knowledge and attitudes towards sports supplements. A cross-sectional survey was conducted in western Algeria, involving 200 athletes. They completed a validated questionnaire on socio-demographic parameters, sports supplementation practices, and knowledge. The findings showed that 100% of the participants reported using at least one type of sports supplement, with gainers (25%), whey protein (20%), and BCAA (20%) being the most commonly used. The main motivations for supplement usage were to increase muscle mass (59%) and enhance performance (25%).

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Retail stores (76%) emerged as the primary source for obtaining sports supplements. The prevalence of prohibited substance use (doping) was 11%, primarily involving anabolic steroids (95%). Side effects were experienced by 31% of consumers. The internet served as the main source of information regarding supplementation, revealing a significant knowledge gap and lack of risk perception among 61% of the participants. The data from this study highlight a concerning situation regarding sports supplement usage. Implementing targeted prevention strategies to improve athletes' knowledge and alter their behavior towards the appropriate use of sports supplements is crucial.

BIOGRAPHY

Imen Chebaiki completed her PhD in Pharmacy at the age of 24 from Djillali Liabes University, Algeria. She then specialized in toxicology. For the past 5 years, she has been serving as the Module Coordinator for Toxicology in the Pharmacy Department of the Faculty of Medicine. Additionally, she is actively involved in research and scientific production, with a particular focus on radiation protection and food safety. In addition to her academic responsibilities, she also works at the central laboratory of Abdelkader Hassani University Hospital Center, Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria.