

Study says herbal supplements may not be effective for weight loss

26 February 2020, by Kiersten Willis



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

If you've relied on taking herbal supplements to aid in weight loss, a recently published study has news for you.

Researchers at the University of Sydney conducted the first worldwide study of [herbal medicines](#) for weight loss in nearly two decades. Their findings suggest there isn't enough evidence to recommend present treatments.

These findings come despite some herbal medicines showing statistically more weight loss than placebos. The weight loss was less than 5.5 pounds, meaning it's not of clinical significance, according to a news release from the University of Sydney.

"This finding suggests there is [insufficient evidence](#) to recommend any of these herbal medicines for the treatment of weight loss. Furthermore, many studies had poor research methods or reporting and even though most supplements appear safe for short-term consumption, they are expensive and are not going to provide a weight loss that is clinically meaningful," said lead author Dr. Nick Fuller of the University of Sydney's Boden

Collaboration for Obesity, Nutrition, Exercise and Eating Disorders.

Researchers conducted a [systematic analysis](#) and review published in the journal *Diabetes, Obesity & Metabolism*. The study reviewed the most recent global research for herbal medicines and weight loss by locating 54 randomized and controlled experiments that compared the effect of herbal medicines to placebo for weight loss in more than 4,000 participants.

Herbal medicines, or [herbal supplements](#), are products that contain a plant or a combination of plants as the primary ingredient. Those aimed at weight loss can be composed of white kidney bean, green tea and African mango.

According to the study's authors, 1,000 weight loss [dietary supplements](#) were included on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods without evaluation of efficacy between 1996 and 2006.

"The problem with supplements is that unlike [pharmaceutical drugs](#), clinical evidence is not required before they are made available to the public in supermarkets or chemists," Fuller said.

The supplements can be sold and marketed to the public with sponsors—defined as those who import, export or manufacture goods—required to have but not necessarily provide evidence backing their claims. Just 20% of new listings are annually audited to make sure the sponsors meet the requirement, the authors noted.

"The growth in the industry and popularity of these products highlights the importance of conducting more robust studies on the effectiveness and safety of these supplements for [weight loss](#)," Fuller said.

©2020 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution (Atlanta, Ga.)

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

APA citation: Study says herbal supplements may not be effective for weight loss (2020, February 26) retrieved 24 September 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-02-herbal-supplements-effective-weight-loss.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.