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PRESS RELEASE

More research needed to explore link between dietary supplements and work performance, says nutrition expert

A leading expert on public health has called for more research into potential links between food supplements, dietary nutrient density, and productivity in the workplace.

Dr Adam Drewnowski, Professor of Epidemiology, conducted a comprehensive review of health-based intervention programs in the workplace and their impact on employee performance. The literature review was supported by IADSA.

Workplace productivity is commonly evaluated in terms of absenteeism or presenteeism. Reduced performance has been associated with greater employee turnover, more disabilities, and increased healthcare costs. However, few studies on workplace interventions for health have used productivity or work performance as the endpoint.

Presenting his findings in the academic journal *Nutrition Reviews*¹, Dr Drewnowski said that, as a result, evidence linking workplace diet-related interventions with increased workplace productivity was sparse.

“The one consistent underlying assumption was that the planned nutrition-related interventions, which led to healthier diets, would improve workplace productivity in the long term,” he wrote. “However, in most cases, workplace productivity was not measured.”

Dr Drewnowski also addressed a potential role for supplementation in delivering improved workplace performance. Noting that studies carried out to-date had looked at dietary interventions only in relation to food, he suggested that their scope should be widened to include nutrition obtained from elsewhere, including food supplements.

In conclusion, Dr Drewnowski suggested taking a two-pronged approach to future research in order to promote a “nutrition-driven economy”.

“First, large-scale observational studies could include questions about workplace productivity in addition to questions about health outcomes,” he said. “Second, there is a need for randomized controlled trials of supplement use in the workplace, with both health and productivity as

¹ *Impact of nutrition interventions and dietary nutrient density on productivity in the workplace* Nutrition Reviews, nuz088, <https://doi.org/10.1093/nutrit/nuz088>

outcomes. Including workplace productivity measures in standard health surveys would help establish the link between nutrition interventions and local and national economies.”

Simon Pettman, IADSA Executive Director, commented: “Dr Drewnowski has identified, for the first time, a gap in our understanding of the role of nutrition and supplementation in the workplace. His review lays the groundwork for a discussion about how we can address this knowledge deficit through targeted research. IADSA looks forward to engaging with stakeholders to explore how we can best achieve this.”

Based in London, IADSA is the international association of the food supplement sector, with members from six continents. IADSA is the global platform to guide the evolution of policy and regulation in the sector. Visit iadsa.org for more information.

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About IADSA

Established in 1998, IADSA is an international body comprising member associations and companies operating in the global supplements sector. Bringing together food supplement associations from six continents, IADSA is a trusted source of information and runs regional and national regulatory, scientific and technical programmes in many parts of the world, supporting and advising governments and other stakeholders in relation to the development and implementation of regulation and policy. IADSA also works with companies and authorities to build national associations in countries where they do not already exist. IADSA’s full name is International Alliance of Dietary/Food Supplement Associations.