



24th September 2009

Statement prepared by the Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA)

Following reports in the national media questioning the safety and efficacy of multivitamins, Professor Ratcliffe of the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences at Robert Gordon University who was widely quoted on the subject, has spoken out about his opinions on supplementation.

"We were especially concerned by the inaccuracies in Professor Ratcliffe's reported claims, in particular those suggesting that users might consume excessive vitamin A when combining multivitamins with fish oils", said Graham Keen, Executive Director of the HFMA.

"The subsequent coverage in response to this story, namely the Daily Mail's 'Vitamin pills a waste of money?' even suggested that taking more than 400IU of Vitamin D per day could be 'lethal' - an outrageous claim that is totally inaccurate. As a result, the HFMA was keen to speak to Professor Ratcliffe directly to clarify his views and avoid further misinformation in future."*

The HFMA was delighted to receive the following statement from Professor Ratcliffe, "I am well aware of the content of fish oil supplements and my comments at the British Science Festival and the press conference were in no way, or at no time, addressed to those.

"I clearly referred to the combination of 'fish liver oils' taken with multivitamins, but unfortunately subsequent media reporting has failed to include the vital 'liver' part. Clearly, those taking fish oils with multivitamins would not be at risk from exceeding the recommended daily dose of Vitamin A or D."

Graham Keen concluded, "The HFMA was extremely disappointed to learn that, once again, the media has failed to responsibly report on the significant role that supplementation, alongside other healthy lifestyle choices, has to play in safeguarding the nation's nutritional sufficiency."

ENDS

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The HFMA

The Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) is the voice of the UK's natural health industry and represents more than 120 manufacturers and suppliers of natural health products.

Founded in 1965, the HFMA is a not-for-profit organisation which operates long-standing codes of practice to ensure that member companies adhere to high standards and offer good quality, safe products supported by responsible, lawful information.

For further information about the HFMA, visit www.hfma.co.uk.

References

* The tolerability and biochemical effects of high-dose bolus vitamin D2 and D3 supplementation in patients with vitamin D insufficiency, P Leventis and P D W Kiely, Scand J Rheumatol, November 5, 2008; 1-5.