



MEDIA RELEASE

Consumers Can Have Confidence in Australian Complementary Medicines

CHC's Executive Director Dr. Wendy Morrow balanced the enthusiastic pros and cons of responses to the many media articles on the recently published Iowa Women's Health Study, which has generated much interest.

"As the peak industry body in Australia for Complementary Medicines, we feel that the study and its coverage has raised concern about the safety of multivitamins and individual nutrients for older women. However, leading nutrition experts have noted that it appears to be seriously flawed research - making any recommendations from the findings dubious. The study, which looked at dietary supplement use and mortality, has been published this week in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

In short, the 'maths' is wrong," Dr Morrow went on to say, "and there was no way of differentiating between the impact of individual nutrients, when multiple supplements were taken and nutrient measures were unreliable. It also did not take into account the number of these women who were taking specific supplements because they were unwell. It would be unsurprising that a higher proportion of deaths were in that group, and it is quite possible the deaths were not related to the multivitamins."

Dr Morrow also stated that *"it's really difficult to draw comparisons between Australia and other countries such as the US, where this study took place, due to the extremely tough regulatory consumer protections in place for medicines in Australia, as well as the completely different product formulations allowed elsewhere.*

Importantly, we also reiterate and encourage consumers to consult with their health care professionals when thinking about their supplementation needs. We also stress that nutrition, lifestyle and supplementation need to be viewed overall, not in isolation of each other"

Dr Morrow invited all those interested in the debate on CM's, including relevant science, research, evidence, regulation and marketing to hear from 20 leading speakers debating these very topics at to the CHC 2011 National Conference on Oct 27/28 in Sydney: www.chc.org.au

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