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Nutritional supplements and energy drinks-dissimilar or similar label and other information that may influence the consumer

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Nutritional supplements (sports food) are used by competitive and recreational athletes of all ages. These are often people in predominantly affluent communities, who can afford the cost of nutritional supplements. The situation is further exacerbated by the general pressure placed on certain groups to use supplements. Young sports participants who are engaged in developmental and competitive phases of sport, in particular, encounter peer pressure to use supplements and to enhance body image. As a consequence the supplement industry has grown to meet the increasing demand. Energy drink consumption is currently an emerging and a diverse phenomenon globally. The youth (in South Africa) become an attractive consumer base for such 'energy' products, due to various social-cultural and lifestyle shifts. For the non-affluent youth consumer who may not be able to afford nutritional supplement products, may resort to energy drinks, to redirect their ideas of a good body-image. In contrast the affluent youth consumer may compliment his nutritional supplement regime, with energy drinks. The information or sources may not be accurate, due to the general non-regulation of the industry. It therefore is important to have specific knowledge and understanding of information stated on the product labels and/or gathered for both nutritional supplements and energy drinks that will contribute to ensure informed choice. The research objective is to explore the supplement and energy drink labels, and other sources of information that may influence purchasing decisions and trends that may contribute to the body-image aspiration, in the respective communities.

Biography

Gary Gabriels is a Research Scientist at the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa. He has obtained his Doctorate in Pharmacology at UCT. His broader research interest is in the area of Consumer Protection, related to prohibited substance contamination and/or adulteration, content validity and information and knowledge provided on nutritional and traditional supplement product labels.

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