



Australian Self-Medication Industry Inc
Suite 2203, Level 22, 141 Walker Street,
North Sydney NSW 2060
PO Box 764, North Sydney NSW 2059
Ph +61 2 9922 5111 Fax +61 2 9959 3693
Email: info@asmi.com.au www.asmi.com.au
ABN 55 082 798 952

3 August 2010

MEDIA RELEASE

Calcium supplements and cardiovascular events

The Australian Self Medication Industry (ASMI), the industry body representing non-prescription consumer healthcare products said today that consumers should not be alarmed by recent media coverage linking calcium supplements with an increased risk of heart disease and should seek advice from their healthcare professional if they are concerned about their use of these products.

ASMI was responding to media coverage regarding the safety of calcium supplements following the publication of a recent article by Bolland et al in the British Medical Journal ^[1]. The article by Bolland suggested that the role of calcium supplements should be reassessed because they could increase a person's risks of heart disease.

ASMI Regulatory and Scientific Affairs Director, Steven Scarff said that there was good evidence that calcium supplements reduced the risk of fractures and hence played a useful role in the treatment of osteoporosis ^[2, 3], and that the association with heart disease was controversial ^[4].

Mr Scarff also said that, in contrast to the Bolland study, other recent studies had failed to find a relationship between calcium supplements and increased cardiovascular risk ^[5, 6, 7] or had in fact ruled out such a relationship ^[8].

Mr Scarff said that consumers should continue to aim for the recommended daily calcium intake of 1000-1300mg/day (depending on their age and sex ^[9]) and that they should do this through eating a healthy diet or from supplements where their dietary intake was inadequate.

References

- [1] Bolland MJ, Avenell A, Baron JA, Grey A, Maclennan GS, Gamble GD, Reid IR. Effect of calcium supplements on risk of myocardial infarction and cardiovascular events: meta-analysis. *BMJ*. 2010 Jul 29;341:c3691. doi: 10.1136/bmj.c3691.
- [2] Tang BM, Eslick GD, Nowson C, Smith C, Bensoussan A. Use of calcium or calcium in combination with vitamin D supplementation to prevent fractures and bone loss in people aged 50 years and older: a meta-analysis. *Lancet*. 2007 Aug 25;370(9588):657-66.
- [3] Osteoporosis Australia web-site. Calcium Supplements and heart Disease. www.osteoporosis.org.au
- [4] Gustavo Duque, Jacqueline J Close, Julien P de Jager, Peter R Ebeling, Charles Inderjeeth, Stephen Lord, Andrew J McLachlan, Ian R Reid, Bruce R Troen and Philip N Sambrook. Treatment for osteoporosis in Australian residential aged care facilities: consensus recommendations for fracture prevention. *MJA* 2010; 193 (3): 173-179
- [5] Chung M, Balk EM, Brendel M, Ip S, Lau J, Lee J, Lichtenstein A, Patel K, Raman G, Tatsioni A, Terasawa T, Trikalinos TA. Vitamin D and calcium: a systematic review of health outcomes, *Evid Rep Technol Assess (Full Rep)*. 2009 Aug;(183):1-420. Review.
- [6] Wang L, Manson JE, Song Y, Sesso HD. Systematic review: Vitamin D and calcium supplementation in prevention of cardiovascular events. *Ann Intern Med*. 2010 Mar 2;152(5):315-23. Review.
- [7] Sabbagh Z, Vatanparast H. Is calcium supplementation a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases in older women? *Nutr Rev*. 2009 Feb;67(2):105-8.
- [8] Lewis JR, Calver J, Zhu K, Flicker L, Prince RL. Calcium supplementation and the risks of atherosclerotic vascular disease in older women: results of a 5-year RCT and a 4.5-year follow-up. *J Bone Miner Res*. 2010 Jul 7. [Epub ahead of print]
- [9] Australian Government, DOHA, NHMRC Recommended Dietary Intakes

About ASMI: The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) is the peak industry body for the Australian self care industry representing consumer healthcare products including over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines. ASMI's mission is to promote better health through responsible self-care. This means ensuring that safe and effective self-care products are readily available to all Australians at a reasonable cost. ASMI works to encourage responsible use by consumers and an increasing role for cost-effective self-medication products as part of the broad national health strategy. www.asmi.com.au

Media contact: Bob Bowden, Foresight Communications (02) 9241 2811, 0412 753 298
bbowden@bowmac.com.au