

**KNOWLEDGE ON CALCIUM AND  
CONSUMPTION OF CALCIUM  
AMONG VEGETARIANS  
IN WAN FO TEMPLE**

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## ABSTRACT

Calcium consumption among vegetarians is lower than non-vegetarians due to the high amounts of low calcium bioavailability compounds such as oxalates, phytates and dietary fiber present in their diets. The purpose of this study is to assess the calcium knowledge and consumption as well as the correlation of calcium knowledge and calcium consumption among vegetarians. This study was conducted in a Buddhist temple, Selangor where 84 vegetarians; 40 males and 44 females participated in the study. A questionnaire consisting of demographic questions, calcium knowledge quiz and food frequency questionnaire (FFQ) was designed to assess the subjects' calcium knowledge and daily calcium intakes. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 15.0. The mean calcium knowledge score of the subjects fell in the average calcium knowledge level,  $56.35 \pm 14.06\%$ . More than half of the subjects had low level of calcium intake though the mean daily calcium intake ( $811.00 \pm 357.20\text{mg/day}$ ) was within the average calcium intake level (800 to 1300mg/day). Nevertheless, there was a significant difference in mean when calcium intake was compared with gender ( $t=-2.23$ ,  $p=0.004$ ). Moreover, the subjects with university or college education had significantly higher calcium knowledge score and calcium consumption as compared to those with primary education, secondary education and other education levels with  $p=0.003$  and  $p=0.004$  respectively. The results of this study also suggest a positive, significant correlation between calcium knowledge and calcium consumption among the subjects ( $r=0.374$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Therefore, improvement in calcium knowledge among the vegetarians is particularly important to meet the RNI for calcium.

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