

Dietary supplements for losing weight: the potential danger of toxigenic algae and other adulterants.

Suplementos dietéticos para adelgazar: el peligro potencial de las algas toxigénicas y otros adulterantes.

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Abstract

Introduction: Dietary supplements are consumed in order to lose weight or treat obesity, usually present in algae composition of marine and freshwater algae. Ethnobotanical study was conducted for them in some urban and peri-urban localities of the city of La Plata and surroundings and the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. **Material and Methods:** To relieve the study material and associated knowledge ethnobotanical methodology was used with the application of qualitative and quantitative techniques of observation, participant observation, and interviewing and semi-open. The identification of plant components was carried out by systematic anatomy, with the application of analytical techniques for qualitative and quantitative microscopy. **Results and Discussion:** Analyzes denote the mismatch between what records the label and the actual content leading to adulteration or substitution of different magnitude and "violations" to the legislation in Argentina related to the presentation (labeling and information companion). The presence of toxigenic algal species, the iodine content and the accumulation of heavy metals require such a strict quality control of raw material used.

Keywords: dietary supplements, algae, obesity, toxigenic species.