

HFMA defends industry after critical Van Tulleken TV interview

The Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) has taken steps to defend the supplements industry after Dr Xand Van Tulleken gave a highly critical interview on national television.

The HFMA was contacted by ITV's *Good Morning Britain* for a response regarding the appearance of Dr Van Tulleken on the programme on September 10. The HFMA was informed that he would be talking about the wellness industry, misleading claims, excessive marketing and that many consumers could be at risk from taking certain supplements. It added that the HFMA was also aware that he is promoting his new book, which is an investigation into the wellness industry.

During the programme, Dr Van Tulleken was highly critical of the supplements industry, and

discussed vitamin D, magnesium, collagen and lion's mane. At one point, he was asked by presenter, Susanna Reid, who herself said she took supplements, about what "she was wasting her money on", adding that she relies on supplements including vitamins D and B. On vitamin D, he suggested a small dose was appropriate for "some people" but added that it will not do anything for immunity. Collagen was also covered, and while he acknowledged we need collagen, Dr Van Tulleken suggested "if you remove the studies paid for by the collagen industry, it stops working". Similarly, on magnesium, Van Tulleken said we needed it to live but added, "It can be dangerous", and that there is no evidence we should be taking large quantities as the evidence is against it.

In its response, the HFMA continued to argue that the

industry is well regulated, and that the majority of companies are compliant. In addition to its statement, the HFMA added that it is actively seeking to engage with Dr Van Tulleken with a view to discussing the industry and compliance with him.

Martin Last, Director General at the HFMA, commented: "The Health Food Manufacturers' Association encourage members to formulate and recommend supplements as set out in the various regulations around food supplements. We also encourage consumers to look at the labels to see what is in the supplement and how it may fit with the rest of their supplement regime to avoid the risk of excessive intake and to buy from reputable sources.

"The HFMA firmly believe that supplementation has an important role to play in the health of the nation, particularly in line with

NHS recommendations around vitamin D supplementation and also the recommendations that those on the increasingly popular GLP-1 medications consider supplementation in light of the reduced food consumption when using these medications. We actively encourage all producers of food supplements in the UK market to seek accurate advice and follow the regulations and encourage consumers to follow instructions and always inform their health professionals when taking supplements and prescribed medication. It is also important that consumers look at where the information they receive comes from. The regulations in the UK are often more stringent than overseas and therefore quality and safety concerns that may relate to companies abroad, may not truly represent UK brands."