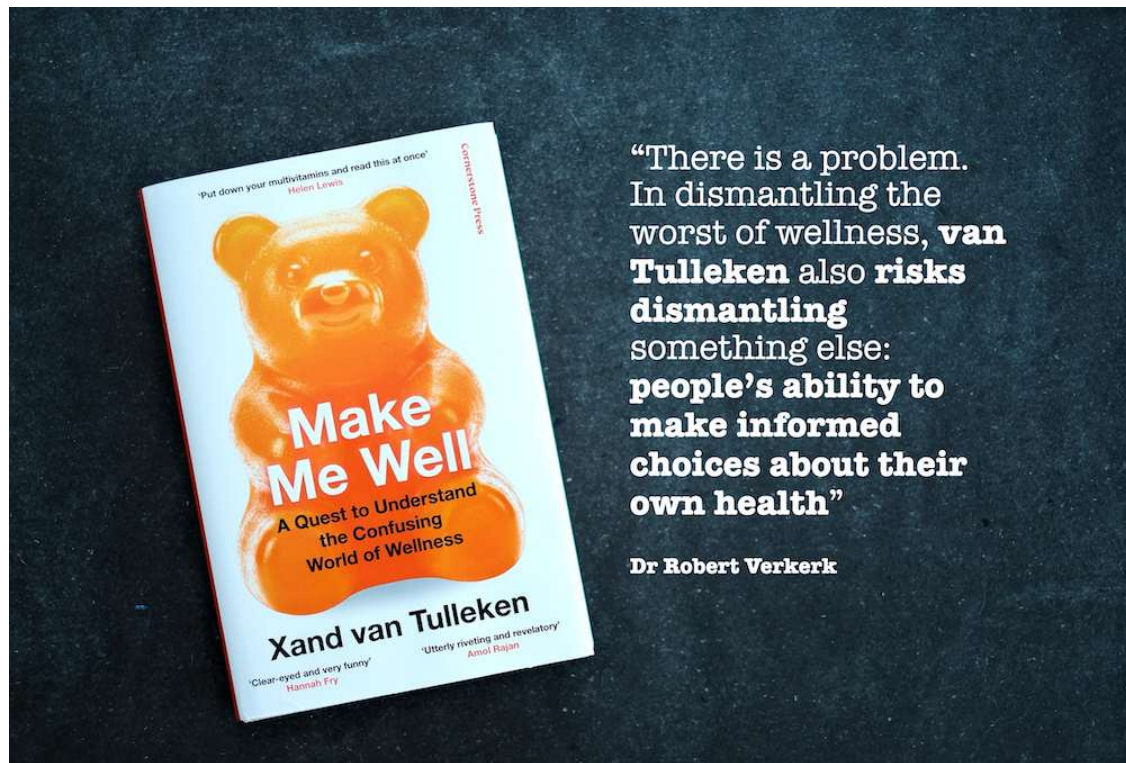


Industry and advocacy groups challenge van Tulleken 'hit piece' on supplements

By [jimmanson](#) - September 20, 2026



Industry and advocacy groups have challenged key arguments made by the doctor and broadcaster Xand van Tulleken in his high profile new book *Make Me Well: A Quest to Understand the Confusing World of Wellness*.

In the book, which went straight to number one in the *Sunday Times* best-sellers list, [van Tulleken claims](#) that the "best research data shows that vitamin and mineral supplements don't help healthy people", and that "most people" do not need to take them. He also accuses the supplements industry of "exploiting people's vulnerabilities", making "extravagant claims" about products – and of being inadequately regulated.

Van Tulleken also criticises the wellness industry for consistently being "ahead of the science" and of "extrapolating extravagant claims before proper trials can be done to establish whether there are any benefits".

'Hit piece'

Dr Robert Verkerk, executive & scientific director at Alliance for Natural Health International, has [critiqued *Make Me Well*](#), which he describes as a "supplements hit piece". He acknowledges that the issues raised in the book "unquestionably deserves exposure". "But,"

he says, “there is a problem. In dismantling the worst of wellness, van Tulleken also risks dismantling something else: people’s ability to make informed choices about their own health”.

Verkerk sees van Tulleken’s interpretation of evidence as “a central problem” in *Make Me Well*. He writes: “He appears to demand near certainty and broad consensus before accepting a benefit. If the evidence falls short, he bins it. He also distrusts industry-funded supplement research even when the funding is properly declared. Apply that rule consistently to pharmaceutical research and see what remains.”

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Responding to *Make Me Well* on behalf of the Health and Food Supplements Information Service, Dr Carrie Ruxton says: “A healthy, varied diet should always come first. But presenting vitamin and mineral supplements as unnecessary or dangerous ignores both the evidence on how people in Britain actually eat and the fact that supplements sold in the UK and European Union are regulated. Vitamin D is the clearest example of why a simplistic “food is always enough” message doesn’t work. Few foods naturally contain much vitamin D and, in the UK, sunlight cannot reliably provide enough during autumn and winter. Government advice is that everyone should consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement during the autumn and winter.

‘Substantial shortfalls’

“The uncomfortable reality is that millions of people are not meeting recommended intakes for key nutrients. The latest National Diet and Nutrition Survey 2019-2023[1], summarised in the new report [“Dietary deficits and future health and wellness fallouts: why we all need to future-proof our diets”](#) which was published by HSIS in July 2026, reveals substantial shortfalls, particularly among teenagers, women and older people. These are not theoretical imperfections in an otherwise ideal diet; some groups persistently have intakes below the Lower Reference Nutrient Intake (LRNI), a level likely to be sufficient for fewer than 3% of people.”

Ruxton adds: “That does not mean every product sold online is suitable for every person, or that “more” is better. People should buy from reputable retailers, follow the label, avoid taking several high-dose products at the same time, and seek advice from a healthcare professional if pregnant, taking prescription medicines or managing a chronic health condition.”

The Health Food Manufacturers Association (HFMA) was invited by Good Morning Britain to make a statement about *Make Me Well* ahead of a high profile interview slot it gave to Xand van Tulleken.

In his statement, the HFMA said: The Health Food Manufacturers’ Association, HFMA, urge 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.”

The HFMA said that it was “actively seeking to engage with Dr Van Tulleken with a view to discussing the industry and compliance with him”.

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