

# IADSA CONNECT

**#10** DECEMBER 2021

## Nurturing the next generation of supplement sector talent

VIDEO COMPETITION SHOWCASES  
TURKEY'S BRIGHTEST PROSPECTS

ICN PARTNERSHIP DRIVES  
SUPPLEMENT SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

**IADSA**

International Alliance of Dietary/  
Food Supplement Associations

# #10

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## TALENT-SPOTTING: CRN GOES ON-CAMPUS TO WIN HEARTS AND MINDS

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Attracting young scientists to the industry is vital for its future, says CRN's Andrea Wong, who tells Connect how she and her team are focusing on nurturing the next generation of supplement sector talent.

The Council for Responsible for Nutrition (CRN) has for its tagline The Science Behind the Supplements. It's immediately clear, therefore, that science is front and centre for the association, which represents businesses in the US supplement sector. Underlining this point, CRN has 20 full-time staff of which five are employed in its Department for Scientific, Regulatory & International Affairs.

Heading this division is CRN's Senior Vice-President, Andrea Wong. "It's important for us to ensure that everything we do, and everything we put out there in terms of communications and advocacy, is grounded in science," she explains. "That's why our department makes up a quarter of the staff here. We make sure that everything that comes out of CRN is scientifically accurate."

At the heart of this approach is a desire to address the fact that some in the academic community view the science of supplements with a degree of scepticism. “We want to make people aware that industry scientists are still scientists,” Wong says. “We all follow the same data. We’re not a different breed.”

Wong, who has a PhD in Toxicology from the University of Toronto, believes misconceptions about the science of supplements can be traced back to the education system, and she understands from experience how they can take root. “When I was in graduate school, I thought my only options were academia or pharma,” she recalls. “I had no idea about the science and regulation of dietary supplements, and all the clinical work that goes into ensuring that a product is safe and will do what it says it’s going to do.”

This insight now drives CRN’s strategy for scientific outreach, which prioritizes engagement with students in order to highlight the career pathways available to them in the supplement sector. In one initiative – a collaboration with Tufts University, Massachusetts – CRN funds travel expenses for students to attend its annual scientific symposium, Science in Session (formerly Day of Science).

The travel grants program assists two to three students a year and has now been extended nationwide via a partnership with the American Society for Nutrition (ASN), which has a significant student membership. CRN is an ASN Sustaining Partner, a status that reflects CRN’s high level of commitment to ASN’s mission. “It’s important to reach out to that student community,” says Wong. “There’s really so much untapped talent that could be coming into our industry, but many young people don’t even know this category exists, or that it’s scientifically based.”

CRN is keen to communicate the strength and depth of its resources. As an organisation, it can provide or facilitate funding for research, supply products and ingredients for studies, and generally deliver supporting knowledge and expertise. The latter has been put to good use in the Botanical Safety Consortium, a public/private partnership established to modernise and enhance the US botanical safety toolkit.



Andrea Wong, PhD, SVP,  
Science and Regulatory Affairs,  
The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN)

Engaging with the scientific community requires significant effort on an ongoing basis, says Wong, but is necessary in order to build credibility for the sector now and in the longer term. “We have to keep on investing in the science to support both the benefits and the safety,” she says. “We have companies who are spending a lot of time and money on developing formulas and clinically testing them to ensure they are safe and beneficial.”

Wong acknowledges that the road to scientific credibility is long, but she says the journey is worth it. “This is hard work,” she admits. “But we need to have something to stand behind. With credible science we can build relationships and point to that science and say, ‘look, we’re serious.’ ”





Samet Serttas,  
Chairman,  
GTBD

## EYES ON THE PRIZE: VIDEO COMPETITION SHOWCASES TURKEY'S BRIGHTEST PROSPECTS

Samet Serttas, GTBD Chairman, spoke to Connect about a new awards programme that's encouraging dietitians to look at food supplements with an open mind.

Turkey's industry association, GTBD, is on a mission to change the way nutritionists perceive food supplements – by engaging with those who are just starting out in the profession. At the forefront of this strategy is a new competition launched in 2021 – the Young Dietician Awards – which has attracted the attention of not just the supplement sector, but also government officials.

The initiative has been a huge success, reports GTBD chairman Samet Serttas. The prize-giving ceremony was held at the climax of a two-day conference and workshop in Antalya in November, convened to draw up the Turkish supplement sector's 2030 Vision. The event was attended by, among others, senior figures from Turkey's Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Trade. "They liked the idea of the award," he says.

***"It was only the first time we have held them, but hopefully we can repeat them every year now."***

The awards are open to nutrition students in their third or fourth years of study at university, and anyone already working as a dietician who is aged under 30. There were three categories this year: Academician, Communication Guru, and Game Changer. Entrants were asked to record a three-minute video. Explaining the choice of format, Serttas says: "We carried out some research among young people and they told us that they like communicating through video but are not so eager to write. Since it was a young scientist award, we decided to fit in with their habits."

# Genç Diyetisyen Ödülleri-2021

## sahiplerini buldu

Bize ilham veren  
tüm genç diyetisyenlere  
teşekkürlerimizle...



The Academician award was collected by İrem Yakışıklı, whose video drew on a range of scientific references to explain how supplements can be an environmentally sustainable addition to the diet. Communication Guru was Ömer Faruk Korkmaz, who looked at the ways in which supplements can enhance wellbeing for people with busy urban lifestyles. Winner of the Game Changer prize was Büşra Köse, who applied out-of-the-box thinking in a video that explored ways the food industry and dieticians could work together to create healthier ready meals and processed foods that are enriched with vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients.

The awards were created, explains Serttas, in response to concerns that there is not enough understanding of the role of supplements among those currently teaching in Turkey's nutrition faculties. "In general, modern food products, including supplements, are not on their agenda," he says.

***"They still favour the traditional Mediterranean-style diet, and that is what they teach. It's harder to change the minds of older academics, so we have decided to focus on educating younger students and professionals in the sector about the benefits of supplements."***

Plans are already underway to promote the 2022 Dietician of the Year awards. This will include a roadshow visiting universities – something that wasn't possible in 2021 due to the pandemic. In addition, GTBD is collaborating with Professor Gulden Pekcan, one of Turkey's leading experts on nutrition, to compile and publish a textbook for students. Serttas believes the book, which will cover areas such as regulation, vitamins, minerals and botanicals, represents a first in Turkey.

In the opinion of Serttas, partnerships with nutritionists, as well as others in and close to the supplement sector, will be key to helping Turkey tackle its chief health concerns. "The challenges are big: obesity, nutrition deficiencies, healthcare costs, environmental sustainability," he says. "If we are going to bring about change, different stakeholders need to work together. This is the message GTBD is bringing."

**GTBD**  
Food Supplement & Nutrition Association



# PLUGGED IN: ICN PARTNERSHIP DRIVES SUPPLEMENT SECTOR ENGAGEMENT WITH NUTRITION SOCIETIES

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IADSA is a partner of the 2022 International Congress of Nutrition in Tokyo. Simon Pettman, IADSA Executive Director, explains why this international nutrition event is important for the supplement sector.

The International Congress of Nutrition (ICN) is the global gathering of the world's nutrition societies – and is one of the key events in the calendar. The next edition is scheduled to take place in Tokyo, Japan, from 6 to 11 December 2022, having been postponed from September 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. IADSA is a Congress Partner, which means the association will benefit from enhanced levels of exposure throughout the event.

Nutrition societies are umbrella organizations under which scientists from all nutrition-related disciplines can convene to address issues, challenges, and opportunities of common interest. Their members are highly influential in terms of shaping research priorities, policy goals, and health education programmes.

In recent years, IADSA's objectives have expanded from engaging with regulators to include demonstrating the public health value of supplementation. Taking part in ICN is strategically important because it plugs the supplement sector directly into the nutrition community and the societies that represent their interests. It represents an excellent opportunity for our sector to interface with these stakeholders and increase their understanding of the positive role supplements can play in society.

People working in the scientific community fulfil a range of roles that directly or indirectly impact on the supplement sector. They disseminate, via publications, frameworks for nutrition science and policy. Examples might include nutrient reference intakes, dietary guidelines, and research standards. In addition, they sponsor and develop education initiatives.

The memberships of nutrition societies are diverse, comprising industry, academic, government and NGO scientists. They include key opinion leaders who comment regularly in the media, as well as experts who sit on committees to advise government on areas such as regulation, nutrition policy, and best practice. They also include graduate students and young scientists, who represent the future of scientific leadership.

ICN is an opportunity to engage with many of these nutrition professionals, some of whom, perhaps, have negative views of them, or misconceptions. ICN provides an opportunity to highlight how the regulatory systems in place around the world ensure that the safety of consumers is always the priority. Furthermore, it can help show how supplements could provide a solution to some of the nutrition challenges that exist in most countries.

Organisers of ICN 2022 have chosen as its theme *The Power of Nutrition: For the Smiles of 10 Billion People*. Writing on the event website, the chair of the organising committee, Professor Hisanori Kato, said: "The population of our planet is projected to grow to 10 billion over the course of this century. Nutrition has the power to provide health and happiness to people living today, as well as to future generations, as we head towards the 22nd century."

This theme is perfectly aligned with IADSA's work to raise awareness and increase understanding of how supplements could offer a solution for many of the nutrition challenges we face today. For more information about ICN, visit [icn22.org](https://icn22.org).



22nd IUNS-ICN  
INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF  
NUTRITION IN TOKYO, JAPAN  
DECEMBER 6-11, 2022



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