

Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society Award for 2018

Professor Chunming Chen

Senior Advisor, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, China
Honorary President, Chinese Nutrition Society, China



Professor Chen Chunming currently serves as the Senior Advisor on Science for the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention and is the Honorary President of Chinese Nutrition Society. She was the founder and past Director of the International Life Science Institute (ILSI) Focal Point in China,

Born in 1925, Professor Chen Chunming was trained and graduated as Bachelor of Science on Nutritional Sciences in the Department of Agricultural Chemistry of the National Central University of China in 1947. She has worked in nutrition research since then, and has been engaged in research on rickets, vitamin D, and national nutritional surveys. She has focused on Population Nutrition and Nutrition Policy since 1982, designed the National Nutrition and Food Surveillance System in China and conducted 8 rounds of surveillance (1990-2010) to provide a clear picture of the nutritional status and child nutrition in China during rapid economic development as well as the global economic crisis. Her's was the first group to apply the WHO child growth standards (2006) in China. The data collected formed the scientific basis for the National Programme for Child Development and the Ministry of Health's first National Report on Nutrition among Children Aged 0-6 (2012). This is also the main information source for the WHO/UNICEF report on child nutrition in China. Monitoring over the past two decades has revealed that the degree of malnutrition in children under 5 varies according to growth periods, with the 12-24 months phase showing the greatest need for well-designed complementary foods. Professor Chen Chunming and her team developed a complimentary food supplement (Ying Yang Bao, YYB) for use in 6-24 month babies in poor rural homes. The first study in Gansu showed that the use of YYB significantly improved nutrition and health among infants and young children. According to a 6-year follow-up investigation, YYB not only promoted growth and reduced iron deficiency anemia in infants and young children, but also has a long-term positive impact on children's cognitive development. Based on the results of the Gansu project and the child nutrition programs in earthquake affected areas in 2008, Professor Chen Chunming and her colleagues drafted the General Standards for Complementary Food Supplements (GB/T 22570-2008), revised as a national food safety standard (GB 22570-2014) in 2014. In 2011, the All-China Women's Foundation, the Ministry of Health, and the China Child and Teenagers' Fund jointly organized a large public volunteer project "Action to Eliminate Infant Anemia" using YYB as the main intervention method. Professor Chen headed the expert group. In July 2012, the Ministry of Health and the All-China Women's Foundation jointly launched the "Pilot Project of Nutrition Intervention for Children in Poor Areas." One hundred million RMB of state funding was earmarked to provide free YYB to over 270,000 infants between 6-24 months old (one package per day) in 100 poor counties of 10 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities). Professor Chen Chunming served as the chief adviser to the expert group for this project. The Chinese government increased the investment in providing free YYB to infants in poor areas and the uptake by children of YYB increased year by year. Up to 2016, the government of China has invested 1.9 billion RMB in YYB for 4.5 million children aged 6-24 months.

With her expertise, she is actively involved in nutrition policy making, obesity prevention and food fortification programs in China. In 2000, Professor Chen Chunming and other experts organized a collaborative research team and produced the first comprehensive analysis of obesity and disease risk among Chinese people, and which proposed BMI cut-off points based on these data, namely that $BMI \geq 24$ and $BMI \geq 28$ be defined as the criteria for overweight and obesity respectively; then they developed *Guidelines for Prevention and Control of Overweight and Obesity in Chinese Adults*, and *Guidelines for Prevention and Control of Overweight and Obesity in Chinese School Children*. This was of groundbreaking importance for the prevention and control of China's increasing obesity and related disease problem. In 2011, Professor Chen and her team developed "Diagnostic criteria for overweight and obesity in Chinese adults", with BMI cut-off points, based on the Guidelines for Prevention and Control of Overweight and Obesity in Chinese Adults. In 2013, the National Health and Family Planning Commission promulgated these diagnostic criteria for nation-wide application. Their research on Obesity won the Second Class Award for Scientific Advancement by the Chinese Preventive Medicine Association, China Medical Association, in 2016.

Professor Chen was the Director-General of the Department of Health and Epidemic Prevention of the Ministry of Health of China during 1982-1984 and the founding President of the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine (Now the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention) during 1983-1992; founding Director of the ILSI Focal Point in China during 1993-2004. The ILSI Focal Point in China has focused on nutrition, food safety and public health, offering the latest scientific information to relevant government departments, the scientific community, and businesses as a bridge between the government, academia and industry.

In 1989, she founded Biomedical and Environmental Science with Professor Frederick Coulston, serving as co-Editor in Chief.

Professor Chen has received many awards, including: The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations ‘Certificate of Achievements in Nutrition’ in 1992. She became a Fellow of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) in 1997, was awarded the Gopalan Award on Nutrition by the Indian Nutrition society in 2003, and the *Living Legend* Award by IUNS in 2009. Professor Chen won the Wu Jieping-Paul Jansen Award of Merit (吴杨奖特殊贡献奖) in 2014; the Chinese Nutrition Society Lifetime Achievement Award in 2015; and the Soong Chingling Pediatric Lifetime Achievement Award (宋庆龄儿科医学终身成就奖) in 2017.

As a member of the WHO Expert Panel on Nutrition during 1979-2002 and widely involved in nutrition studies in China, she has actively participated in international nutrition. She was elected as the Vice Chairperson of the first FAO/WHO International Conference on Nutrition held in 1992. She was involved in the WHO Reference Group for drafting the NCD (non-communicable disease) prevention strategy. She was a Board member of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) during 2002-2011. In 2009 she became a member of the Global Agenda Council on Nutrition of the World Economic Forum.

Her remarkable life and achievements have enriched food and nutrition science in the interests of the peoples, not only of China, but also of the Asia Pacific region and beyond. The Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society’s 2018 Award to her is a notable further recognition of her contributions to nutritionally-related health.

Citation by
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