32 MILLION ITALIANS USE FOOD SUPPLEMENTS. BUT ARE ALL THESE PRODUCTS EQUAL?

AN ADVISORY BOARD OF 10 ITALIAN AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS ADDRESS THE ISSUE WITH A CONSENSUS PAPER

FOOD SUPPLEMENTS OF BOTANICAL ORIGIN:
A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO QUALITY
THE CASE OF TURMERIC

Milan, 3rd February 2020 – According to Censis¹, 32 million Italians use food supplements, and 18.7 million of them are habitual users. Consumption transcends gender, age and geographical area in a sector which includes a vast quantity of very different products. These products require different degrees of attention and transparency regarding quality and safety, which are not always easy to comprehend.

In this context, how should supplements that guarantee quality, efficacy and safety be chosen?

The Advisory Board on the Quality of Botanical Supplements has been formed to address this issue and clarify questions on the basis of scientific evidence and clinical experience. Ten Italian and international experts: doctors, biologists, chemists from a range of specialist fields met to draw up a shared position with the Consensus Paper: Food Supplements of Botanical Origin: a multidisciplinary approach to quality. The case of turmeric. The report was recently presented in Milan.

CORRECT CONSUMPTION OF BOTANICALS THROUGH QUALITY CONTROL AND INFORMED USE

A supplement of quality can be recognized, mainly with the expertise of a doctor or pharmacist. Prescribers can request information to evaluate the quality and safety of products, transparency on the production chain, from the raw material to the finished product, and scientific evidence such as preclinical, clinical, pharmacokinetic studies on botanicals.

Equally important is awareness in the use of supplements. The widespread tendency among consumers to consider them natural products and therefore "in themselves good", together with their easy accessibility, have fostered a "do-it-yourself" approach. However, the use of supplements of botanical origin requires an overall assessment of the individual’s condition, any possible interactions between the active ingredients contained in the supplements in question and other drugs or supplements the individual may be taking: skills which doctors and pharmacists possess.

THE CASE OF TURMERIC, ONE OF THE WORLD’S MOST WIDELY STUDIED BOTANICAL EXTRACTS

The Consensus Paper presented in Milan by the experts of the Advisory Board on the Quality of Botanical Supplements delves into the case of turmeric, one of the most studied and used botanical extracts in the world.


(AdvisoryBoardBotanicalsQuality_ENG_DEF)
Recognized by the Italian Ministry of Health for its antioxidant effects and its osteoarticular function, turmeric has been the subject of clinical studies that have demonstrated its anti-inflammatory function, through which it contributes to maintaining gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, osteoarticular, and liver health.

As regards its efficacy, turmeric, like many botanical extracts, is not easily absorbable by the body, a problem addressed by a number of formulations, such as the technologically innovative turmeric phytosome.

Despite the widespread availability and high consumption of turmeric, it is still advisable to seek the opinion of doctors or pharmacists to evaluate if taking such a dietary supplement.

**SUPPORT FROM THE ITALIAN NUTRACEUTICAL SOCIETY - SINut**

The Consensus Paper *Food Supplements of Botanical Origin: a multidisciplinary approach to quality* has received the backing of the Italian Nutraceutical Society – SINut, an independent non-profit association which undertakes to develop, encourage and promote nutraceutical research. The scientific value of the Paper is recognized and deemed consistent with the objectives of the association.

*The “Advisory Board on the Quality of Botanical Supplements” was created on the initiative of Indena, a leading company in the production of quality botanical ingredients, and of Scharper, a pharmaceutical company also with a history of development and marketing of food supplements promoted exclusively to the medical profession.*
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