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CHC Industry Must Do More To Help Consumers Age Healthily, Especially Women

by [David Ridley](#)

Consumer health companies need to meet consumers where they are in their life-stage journeys, providing healthy aging solutions like dietary supplements that have clearly communicated and science-backed benefits, argued panelists at a recent IQVIA Consumer Health webinar. This is particularly the case for women, who are underserved and want natural support for changes like the menopause, said Haleon's Sheryl Tan.

Women are “underserved,” especially when it comes to age-related changes like the menopause, argued Haleon’s Sheryl Tan at a recent IQVIA Consumer Health webinar.

While there is help out there for women going through the menopause, many of the solutions and the education currently available are “not really made for women,” insisted Tan, who is Haleon’s head of medical and scientific affairs in Asia.

“They're on a self-discovery journey,” Tan continued. “And this is where we need to focus more on having products, services and technology that are really designed for women.”

“When you think about a woman undergoing menopausal transition, often they are given hormone replacement therapy,” Tan explained. “But hormone replacement therapy, despite being effective, has drawbacks. And so many women today are looking for natural solutions.”

“And I think this is where we could do more for them, giving them options that are more natural and giving them the option earlier so that they can take better care of themselves as they age.”

On A Journey

In general, self-care companies need to understand that aging consumers are “on a life stage journey,” Tan said, speaking at IQVIA Consumer Health’s [‘Unlocking Opportunities in the Healthy Aging Market.’](#)

As people move through life, their needs will change, Tan noted, pointing to the results of IQVIA CH’s recent study on “aging well with supplements” in Asia Pacific region.

For example, four out of five of the consumers surveyed by IQVIA CH – which included people 60 years old and above, their caregivers and those aged between 45-59 years old who are transitioning to their senior years – are suffering from at least some form of sleeping issues.

“This is very eye-opening,” commented IQVIA CH’s APAC real world evidence and claims lead Aida Moore. “Though we probably should not be surprised, with all the stress levels that the population has been experiencing, pressure from work, financial instability, and so on.”

Consumers in APAC region realize the impact of these sleep disturbances on a variety of ways, Moore continued. “It’s linked to their mental health, their performance, their energy levels and even eating habits and nutrition.”

Self-Care Trigger

Haleon’s Tan also added joint pain, weight gain and dullness of appearance to the list of health issues that consumers start to experience as they move through life.

In addition to encouraging people to eat well and exercise more, Tan suggested that these “undesirable changes” can be a “very good trigger” for self-care.

“And this is where supplementation can play a role,” she suggested. “But I think we need to move away from just identifying key nutritional deficiencies. It’s about identifying the benefit that you need in the supplement product.”

Tan gave another example, this time drawn from Haleon’s own research. A recent study by the firm involving 2,262 participants aged 65 years and over claims to have demonstrated that daily use of the company’s Centrum Silver multivitamin may slow cognitive aging by 60%.

Rather than looking at the general wellness benefits of daily multivitamin supplementation, the study focused on an aspect of aging that people worry about – cognitive decline – and showed a clear outcome.

Benefit-Focused

“This is what I mean by understanding the benefit that consumers are looking for and finding the right product to deliver that benefit,” Tan explained.

The study also provides crucial scientific backing for Centrum use, which “gives senior consumers the confidence that there is clear benefit for intake,” Tan pointed out. “There is no shortcut here and it's never going to be enough. At least for Haleon, we will continue to invest in the trusted science behind our brands.”

Accessibility is also crucial when it comes to vitamins and mineral supplements, Tan noted. “It's important that we as industry, make sure that healthy aging is available for everyone,” she argued.

“Of course there will be people who can afford premium, and they're willing to pay for high science ingredients, but we also need to look after people who need affordable options to self-care.”

Purchasing Behavior

Multivitamins are the most-purchased type of supplements among APAC aging health consumers, followed by vitamin C, vitamin B, calcium and immunity supplements, IQVIA CH's research shows.

In terms of what motivates APAC consumers to take supplements, supporting the immune system was highest (72% of respondents), followed by maintaining healthy bones and joints (65%), having a complete and balanced nutrition (65%), boosting energy levels (50%), supporting lifestyle change and stress resilience (36%) and supporting body recovery after getting sick (33%).

“We see that the role of the supplements in extending the health span of aging adults is very important according to consumers,” Moore commented. “Consumer education is key: as long as consumers understand the benefits of the intake of health supplements, they will be taking them.”

“I think the most important messages that we can derive from analyzing all this data is that consumers already engage in health-supporting behavior even before they start actively ageing, and it is on us as representatives of the healthcare sector to help equip them with the necessary knowledge, products and technology,” Moore concluded.