

Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society Award for 2023

Dr Chizuru Nishida PhD, MA

*Head of the Cross-Cutting Unit of Safe, Healthy and Sustainable Diet, WHO
Department of Nutrition and Food Safety*



Dr Chizuru Nishida, after serving as the Coordinator (Head) of Nutrition Policy and Scientific Advice Unit of the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development in WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland for 10 year (2010 – 2019), served as the Head of the Cross-Cutting Unit of Safe, Healthy and Sustainable Diet at the newly merged WHO Department of Nutrition and Food Safety from 2020 to 2023. As the Head of these Units, Dr Nishida continued to lead the development of WHO guidance and scientific advice on diet, nutrition and health in order to strengthen the coherence and alignment of WHO's guidance, policy actions and provision of scientific advice and technical support to Member States and to the WHO Regional and Country Offices.

During the last almost 36 years of her career in WHO, Dr Nishida has worked in a variety of roles and responsibilities at all three levels (global, regional and country levels) of the Organization, including the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific and a few countries in Asia such as Nepal and the Philippines, but focussing on the areas of work to scientific advice on diet and nutrition and their impact on health which are the technical areas of her expertise and training. For 12 years, she has focused her work on a series of international policy development and implementations related to diet and nutrition and built strong partnership with various UN Agencies, donors and other stakeholders to support countries in developing and implementing intersectoral nutrition policies and strategies. She had also established partnership and leverage valuable networks of globally recognized experts and scientific communities leading international standard setting and provision of scientific advice on diet, nutrition and health.

Since 2003, Dr Nishida also served as the head of the WHO delegation at the Codex Committees on Nutrition and Food for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) and Food Labelling (CCFL). She has continuously advocated for the work of Codex to be relevant not only to protect food safety, but also to improve food quality and ensure protecting consumers from increasing public health problems of obesity and diet-related noncommunicable diseases, through ensuring policy coherence in the development and updating of Codex standards and guidelines (i.e. reducing sodium, sugars and saturated fat contents, eliminating industrially produced trans fats).

Dr Nishida was born in Osaka, Japan, and obtained her undergraduate degree in 1981 from the American University in Washington, D.C. in USA, where she first encountered then the emerging discipline of nutrition anthropology which was addressing a multi-faceted field based on chemistry, biology and social science including behaviours and social factors related to diet and health. She then obtained her Master's degree in medical anthropology from the University of Connecticut in USA in 1983, focusing on public health nutrition and development as she was keenly interested in assessing the nutrition transition and its impact on inequality. For her Ph.D. degree which she continued her study at the University of Connecticut, but finally obtained her Ph.D. from the Graduate School of Nutrition Sciences at Kagawa Nutrition University in Saitama, Japan in 2000, where she focused on nutrition science and epidemiology to further strengthen her scientific expertise.

In 2019, Dr Nishida was elected to be the Chair of the Cochrane Nutrition Advisory Board which guided the work and strategic direction of the Cochrane Nutrition and completed her 3-year term of the Chair in 2023. She has published numerous peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and review articles on the areas related to nutrition policy and scientific advice related to dietary goals for the prevention of obesity and noncommunicable diseases. In 2023, she was nominated as a member of the planning Committee of the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) on the Use of Meta-Analyses in Nutrition Research and Policy.

Dr Nishida has made a remarkable contribution to the nutritionally-related health and wellbeing of peoples in the Asia Pacific region and beyond, now recognised by the Asia Pacific Nutrition Society with its Award for 2023.

Citation by

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Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society