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Popular Article

## Exploring The Growing Phenomenon of Nutraceuticals: Binding the Gap Between Nutrition and Pharmaceuticals

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### *Abstract*

The nutraceutical sector is already a multi-billion dollar, highly influential industry, and during the next ten years, it is expected to expand quickly. Nutraceuticals are a broad category of food-derived products that have gained popularity as a result of rising consumer awareness of potential health advantages and the demand for better wellness. This focused examination aims to pinpoint the market potential, worldwide trends, and regulatory frameworks that power the nutraceutical sector. In order to identify areas that require additional study and oversight, safety and efficacy concerns are also explored. Ageing populations, consumer awareness, consumer lifestyle, rising healthcare costs, and marketing channels are key factors in the nutraceutical business. Despite the fact that some nutraceuticals offer promise therapeutic and preventative benefits, there is no common definition or regulatory framework across all nations. Furthermore, the continuing coronavirus pandemic further brought to light the absence of adequate data for their efficacy, safety, and effectiveness. There will be more potential for growth, expansion, and segmentation of nutraceuticals applications if a consistent and clearly defined regulatory framework is combined with knowledge of the primary market drivers for nutraceuticals.

### **Introduction**

A new health paradigm that emphasizes diet and nutrition has arisen during the past few decades. Consumer trends in the Western world have changed towards the purchasing of dietary supplements, functional foods, and nutraceuticals with the purpose of preserving optimal health and minimizing negative health repercussions. This is due to a more health-conscious consumer pool with higher disposable money. A new idea, the term "nutraceuticals" refers to nutritive supplement-like items that provide health advantages above and above their basic nutritional content. Several bioactive ingredients, such as food extracts or extracts enhanced with phytochemicals, have been created and commercialized as pharmaceutical formulations in the recent years. These formulations include capsules, solutions, powders, gels, and more. According to epidemiological research, there

1523



is a correlation between the phytochemical components of nutraceuticals and a minimally improved state of health. A pool of molecules with potential therapeutic qualities has been produced by plant-derived and other natural substances, which is expected to continue to be a source of novel medications for the foreseeable future. In order to maintain health, prevent disease, and improve general health and wellbeing, a variety of dietary products based on the bioactivities of plant components are currently being created. Overall, there is little empirical evidence to support the benefits of nutraceuticals for metabolism and health. The global response to the nutraceutical business was unexpected, and it is now a multibillion industry. The nutraceutical business is expected to develop further, creating new potential for creative products based on customer interest in health-improving foods, as health awareness, including lifestyle modifications, expand globally.

Despite growing public interest in nutraceuticals, there are still a variety of legal regimes and no classifications that are universally accepted. Nutraceuticals are governed differently around the world and are unregulated in some nations. Understanding current market trends for nutraceuticals as well as regional variations in regulatory systems is necessary.

### **Nutraceuticals**

It has been difficult to define nutraceuticals because no one, universal definition is recognized, despite suggestions for a framework to do so. This is mostly caused by regional variations in the laws governing the marketing, sales, safety, and effectiveness of these products as well as cultural influences on their use. Nutraceuticals, dietary supplements, and functional foods are frequently discussed together, which presents a complication. However, it's crucial to understand that these items are classified differently, despite their similar names. For preventive or therapeutic purposes, nutraceuticals typically contain nutrients or extracts taken from foods or other sources of natural origin. Nutraceuticals cover a wide range of product types, including protein powders, vitamin and mineral blends, food-derived active substances or related byproducts, herbal and botanical products, and even parts of dietary supplements. Contrarily, dietary supplements are substances or nutrients that promote nutrient intake, prevent deficiencies, and occasionally have therapeutic effects even though that is not their primary purpose. Although nutraceuticals and dietary supplements frequently come in the form of pills, capsules, gels, syrups, or extracts, they are typically regarded as nonpharmaceutical and nonmedicinal goods. Foods that have additional health advantages beyond their fundamental nutritional content are referred to as functional foods. Functional foods, however, cannot treat or prevent disease on their own, and they are not necessary for a healthy diet. Natural or added components in functional foods may contribute to optimal health



or lower the risk of disease. Another possibility is the utilization of a food-derived ingredient to create unique goods that may fall under several headings. An herb-derived bioactive component may be added to food to create a functional food or it may be encapsulated to create nutraceuticals.

There are other food categories that are comparable, including those for fortified or medical foods. Medical foods are created for the dietary management of conditions such as pancreatic exocrine insufficiency, cachexia, or hypercysteinemia, which have specific nutritional needs that cannot be supplied by regular dietary intake alone. According to the Orphan Drug Act of 1988, this group of foods is deemed a therapeutic agent in the United States (U.S.). Contrarily, fortified foods are a public health initiative that adds vitamins, minerals, or nutrients like vitamin D, calcium, or iron to common foods like cereal, milk, bread, and pasta in an effort to prevent nutritional deficiencies. This method of pellagra and rickets prevention has been effective in the U.S. and other nations.

### **The COVID-19 pandemic's effects on the global market for dietary supplements.**

The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)-caused coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic first surfaced in late 2019 and had devastating effects on a global scale. The disease COVID-19 has a wide spectrum of symptoms, most of which are respiratory in nature. From an asymptomatic infection to a serious condition called acute respiratory syndrome, COVID-19 can be lethal. With little success, researchers have been frantically trying to reuse medications and create brand-new therapies. Dietary supplements and nutraceuticals are among them, and this will have a significant effect on their global sales in 2020. By purchasing nutraceuticals with potential health advantages against respiratory infections and related symptomatology, consumers sought for extra protection from infection and severe disease, which raised sales.

### **The market for nutraceuticals' main drivers**

Because it fits into both developed and emerging countries' contemporary lifestyles, the nutraceutical business will continue to expand. Understanding the market's main factors will open up new options for segmentation, growth, and development.

### **Benefits of nutraceuticals**

The use of nutritional supplements offers hope for addressing underlying medical issues, treating symptoms, and enhancing general health. Numerous nutraceuticals have positive benefits, including phytochemical-enriched food extracts that can reduce oxidation and inflammation and nutraceuticals of marine origin that go beyond omega-3 fatty acids. The application of nutraceuticals for various risk factors, conditions, and diseases like lipid disorders, inflammation, statin



intolerances, or even heart failure has also been the subject of recommendations drafted by experts from the International Lipid Expert Panel (ILEP). With more study, nutraceuticals may also be used to prevent or treat a number of chronic conditions, such as heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, mental health issues, and metabolic disorders. In many cases, there is already strong clinical efficacy evidence available.

Consumers today are more informed, concerned about their health, and their way of life. In order to battle the many non-communicable illnesses linked to unhealthy ageing and living, customers demand safe and effective nutraceuticals that either improve their health and well-being or serve as preventive measures.

### **Future**

Nutraceuticals may provide inexpensive illness prevention and, in certain situations, disease therapy. Faster development times are possible with nutraceuticals, which are also occasionally supplied as native chemicals in herbal form or as essential food elements. Epidemiological studies can establish their safety profiles, reducing the time and cost of clinical trials, making it convenient to identify their health effects. Strategies for preventing disease are pricy and heavily regulated. Nutraceuticals may be able to save costs, time, unpleasant medication, and clinical procedures while enhancing disease prevention.

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