Mostafa Nagib – Country Manager, Lundbeck Saudi Arabia



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24.06.2024

Tags: Saudi Arabia, Lundbeck, CNS, Mental Health, Strategy

Mostafa Nagib outlines Lundbeck's strategy and growth in Saudi Arabia, emphasizing their dedication to neuroscience and expanded access to innovative treatments. He discusses the challenges in mental health awareness and stigma as well as the journey of transforming Lundbeck Saudi to adapt to the Kingdom's rapid development, fostering an environment that welcomes new ideas and challenges outdated business norms highlighting Lundbeck's new local office and advancements in local manufacturing.

How have attitudes and policies around mental health in Saudi Arabia evolved, and what role does Lundbeck play in addressing brain diseases within this context?

Mental health in Saudi Arabia has developed significantly over the past few decades. The establishment of the General Department of Mental Health and Social Health in 1983 marked a crucial turning point, leading to dedicating efforts to improving infrastructure and healthcare professional training. These foundational efforts have led to continuous advancements in the sector.

The Saudi Vision 2030 has further amplified these efforts by aiming to develop a patient-centric healthcare system that addresses not only medical needs but also social, mental, and physical well-being. This holistic approach ensures that mental health remains a top priority. As a result, we

are seeing substantial improvements year after year, with many new and promising treatment options being introduced.

At Lundbeck, we are deeply committed to supporting these national initiatives. Our focus on brain diseases, such as depression and anxiety, aligns perfectly with Saudi Arabia's healthcare goals. We are actively involved in bringing specialized treatments to the region, helping to enhance the overall mental health care landscape. The continuous development in mental health infrastructure and the introduction of new innovative treatments make us very optimistic about the future.

How have Lundbeck's operations evolved in Saudi Arabia over the years, and what are your plans moving forward, particularly regarding your collaboration with MISA and the establishment of a regional headquarters?

Lundbeck has been providing innovative treatments in Saudi Arabia for over 30 years. Our first local entity was established more than 25 years ago, and recently, we transitioned to become a branch of Lundbeck Middle East A/S. Throughout these years, we've had numerous positive stories about how our efforts have improved patients' lives. Moving forward, we are focusing on elevating our value-added activities in mental health to new levels. We're particularly excited about continuing our journey and expanding into new domains within Neuroscience. The decision to establish a regional headquarters in Saudi Arabia is under the purview of our Middle East and Africa Managing Director, which signifies our deep commitment to the region. We're working closely with the Ministry of Investment of Saudi Arabia (MISA) to align our strategic initiatives with the country's vision. This collaboration reflects our long-term investment in Saudi Arabia's healthcare sector and our dedication to enhance mental health across the region.

What are the specific challenges related to Neuro-Psychiatry disorders in Saudi Arabia, and how is Lundbeck contributing to advancing healthcare services for these conditions?

Globally, Neuro-Psychiatry disorders, such as depression and anxiety, face significant challenges related to underdiagnosis and stigma. In Saudi Arabia, the infrastructure for mental health has been strengthening, with initiatives like the comprehensive health counselling program, which aids in early diagnosis of depression and anxiety. The Ministry of Health has also launched digital platforms to expand mental health awareness across the population, addressing disorders such as

stress, depression, and others that often go undetected due to stigma.

Lundbeck is committed to tackling these challenges through extensive educational programs for healthcare professionals (HCPs). We conduct regular scientific activities and seminars with leading national and international experts to educate psychiatrists and neurologists. The Lundbeck Institute, dedicated to enhancing the scientific understanding in mental health, held its first seminar in Saudi Arabia this year and was attended by psychiatrists from Ministry of Health hospitals, marking a significant step in the field of mental health education. Our digital platform, Progress in Mind, provides up-to-date information and educational resources, freely accessible to HCPs, enabling them to educate themselves and others in the community.

Additionally, we collaborate closely with stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, to celebrate events like World Mental Health Day, raising public awareness and reducing the stigma. Our efforts aim to improve the diagnosis and treatment of Neuro-Psychiatry disorders in Saudi Arabia, supporting the country's vision for a comprehensive patient-centric healthcare system.

Lundbeck has shown impressive global growth, especially in antipsychotics and migraine treatments. How is Lundbeck's portfolio specifically represented in Saudi Arabia? What are the key growth drivers today and upcoming launches you're preparing?

Lundbeck Saudi Arabia has seen exceptional growth in the past two years. Our strategy focuses on launching new brands and seizing market opportunities. Saudi Arabia hosts one of the largest portfolios of Lundbeck products globally, including all strategic brands. We recently introduced a new innovative preventive treatment for migraine in October 2023, which underscores the country's importance as a key market for Lundbeck. We continue to prioritize Saudi Arabia for future strategic launches and expansions.

How do you perceive the regulatory environment for new treatments in Saudi Arabia, and what improvements or challenges do you foresee?

The regulatory environment in Saudi Arabia has made significant strides in recent years, particularly with the implementation of a faster approval process. The current timeline of approximately six months for regulatory approvals is commendable, especially compared to other regions. This efficiency allows for quicker access to innovative treatments for patients. From an

industrial standpoint, I believe there’s a continuous opportunity to enhance regulatory processes, particularly in streamlining documentation requirements. However, overall, the current regulatory framework is quite effective and supports timely access to new treatments while maintaining high safety standards.

How does Lundbeck’s unique focus on neuroscience and its foundation’s support resonate with your team and other stakeholders?

Lundbeck’s singular dedication to neuroscience, supported by the Lundbeck Foundation, is deeply ingrained in our company culture and mission. Amidst a backdrop where many companies have withdrawn from neuroscience, our foundation has been instrumental in sustaining our commitment. It grants over 500 million Danish Kroner annually to support neuroscience research, including the prestigious Brain Award, the largest in brain research, amounting to 10 million Danish Kroner each year. Lundbeck itself invests around 20% of its revenues annually into research and development, driving innovation in neuroscience treatments. These investments and our mission resonate strongly with our team and stakeholders, reinforcing our dedication to improving patients’ lives in neuroscience now and in the future.

What are your aspirations for Lundbeck Saudi Arabia in the next three to four years, given Lundbeck’s continuous investment in R&D and the rapid development you’ve observed in Saudi Arabia?

Looking ahead, I’ve seen tremendous growth in Saudi Arabia’s healthcare sector since my arrival nearly three years ago. We’ve been proactive in transforming Lundbeck Saudi to adapt to this rapid development, fostering an environment that welcomes new ideas and challenges outdated business norms. One of the most significant changes has been our ability to tap into a larger pool of Saudi pharmacists, who have brought in energy and enthusiasm, revitalizing our company culture.

We firmly believe in their capabilities and have provided them with the necessary support and coaching to thrive. This infusion of new talent has been complemented by a strategic focus on strengthening our leadership team with individuals who are not only adaptable and forward-thinking but also committed to leveraging the opportunities presented by Saudi Arabia’s evolving healthcare landscape. Together, this cohesive effort has created what we call The New Generation

of Lundbeck Saudi—a dynamic, high-energy team poised for continuous growth and success.

How has diversity and inclusion, particularly in the context of gender representation, evolved at Lundbeck Saudi Arabia?

Diversity and inclusion have naturally become part of our culture at Lundbeck Saudi. We've cultivated an environment where meritocracy prevails, encouraging everyone to voice their ambitions and ideas openly. Some individuals may be exceptionally competent but not communicate it, while others have ambitious aspirations but hesitate to express them. We've addressed this by fostering a safe space where everyone can participate and contribute.

One initiative we've implemented is forming task forces comprised of team members across various levels, from first-line to company steering committee members. These task forces tackle major challenges and opportunities facing the company, allowing team members to collaborate, make decisions, and present their ideas. This process has significantly boosted confidence and engagement among our team. As a result, over the past two years, the diversity of our team has grown significantly. We have made remarkable progress in fostering gender balance, transitioning from an all-male workforce to a dynamic team composed of 55% women and 45% men. Currently, females hold 20% of the managerial positions. Additionally, we've broadened the diversity of our management team, expanding from a single international nationality to a rich blend of three nationalities, both Saudi and international, enriching our corporate culture and perspective.

We are actively seeking to further diversify our leadership. This diversity is crucial for fostering the right mix of perspectives and talents needed to lead our operations in Saudi Arabia effectively. I believe these changes in diversity and inclusion have been transformative, and most importantly, they have occurred organically.

What final thoughts would you like to share with our global audience and stakeholders in Saudi Arabia on behalf of Lundbeck Saudi? Could you also share your commitment to the country?

Looking ahead, I envision our team continuing to develop and thrive. I am dedicated to enhancing Lundbeck's local presence in Saudi Arabia through two key initiatives. Firstly, our new office underscores Lundbeck's commitment to the country by serving as a dedicated hub for local operations, distinct from regional offices, designed with Lundbeck's core values at its heart. This

will empower the new generation of Lundbeck Saudi to embody and promote these values throughout the market. Secondly, we are actively advancing the local manufacturing of Lundbeck brands within Saudi Arabia.

In conclusion, I am particularly enthusiastic about Lundbeck’s recent global leadership changes, which have set us on a transformative journey. Under new global leadership, we aim to become a focused innovator in bringing new treatments to neuroscience, all while ensuring sustainable profitability to maintain our business operations. I am excited about this journey of transformation and believe Lundbeck Saudi is well-prepared and eager to embrace it with our high energy, curiosity, and adaptability.

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