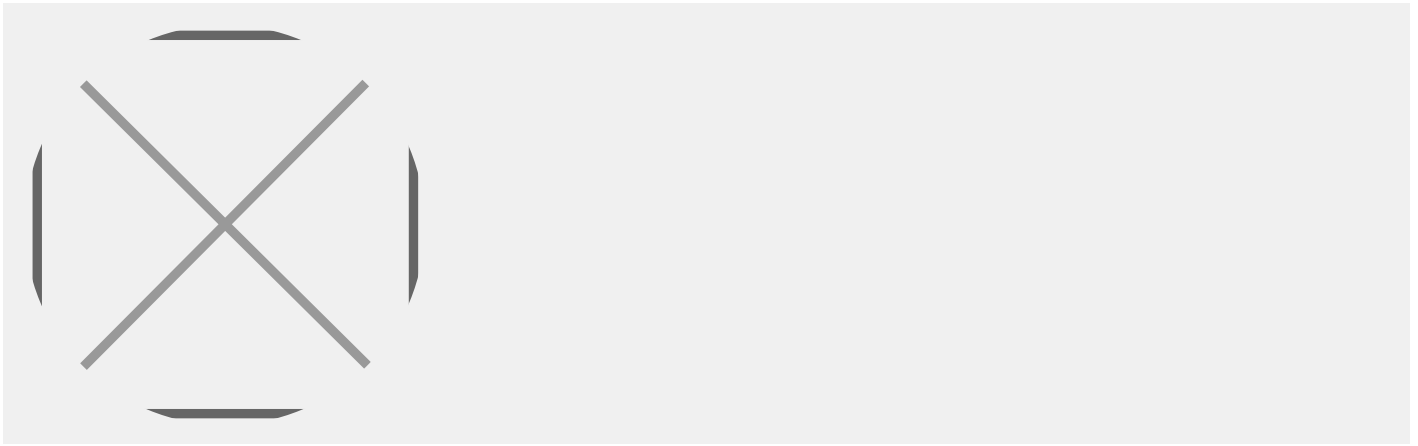


Interview with Judith Greciet, President, Eisai France



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Aricept has been a very effective blockbuster for the group as a whole and the loss of exclusivity affects not only France but entire company. How is Eisai in France going to bridge the gap between this blockbuster and the other developments that are coming down the pipeline?

In regard to group strategy for patent expiration the development of a robust portfolio is key. Overall, the strategy has been to invest in oncology which is what has driven the group to invest in US-based companies like MGI Pharma and Morphotek in order to quickly improve our positioning in this therapeutic area. These alliances allow us to access their acquired expertise and allow them to develop themselves. We also have active internal research in oncology which all told leaves us with a large amount of molecules under development.

Of course, as is always the story with molecules, not all of these will succeed in development to be registered but it still represents a strong portfolio. The first product to come from this is a product for breast cancer which has already finished Phase III studies and will be filed with both US and European agencies in a few weeks. This will be our first step into oncology in Europe and in France.

Besides, to overcome Aricept's lost of patient impact other therapeutic areas are looked into in terms of development to enlarge our future portfolio, such as like critical care with a product for severe sepsis.

Furthermore, we are also working at improving our efficiency and accurately defining our priorities but this is quite a shared process within Pharma companies at this time.

At last, a review, at the regional and local levels, of our operational organization is ongoing so as to ensure smooth transition between current one, in regards of our current portfolio and future needs. In France, sales force organization have already been reviewed in the perspective of this transformation.

In terms of operational strategy in France, we will be maintaining our experience in Central Nervous System where we have an extensive knowledge of Alzheimer's disease and epilepsy in Europe. Our goal is to maintain our leadership with Aricept until the very end of the patent while developing our brand in epilepsy where we already have two products, including a paediatric drug dedicated to an orphan severe syndrome in epilepsy that is available very recently in France. Aside from this, we are preparing the launch of another compound in a few months, Zebinix® which we recently licensed to a Portuguese company at the European level.

Japanese pharmaceutical companies began to internationalize in the 1980s and Eisai came to France in the mid-1990s. Research on the central nervous system appears to be the main way your group incorporates itself into the fabric of the French pharma industry. As the company begins to build expertise in oncology rather than its traditional strengths, how does this change your approach to the French market?

The foundation of Eisai leans on our mission, hhc – human health care – which means that all employees and all decision should seek to improve patient's lives as well as their relatives because a disease effects also their lives This mission is a shared value between all Eisai employees and probably begins by opening our eyes and minds to what our patients or their physicians are telling us as being their needs and try to integrate at all time in our actions

Eisai France has implemented many initiatives including a foundation and Institute (jointly with Pfizer) that allow us to support our vision by gathering as much understanding as we can to better develop our products and cater to patients.

Oncology and epilepsy are areas where there are not only important medical needs but also social and psychological needs that must be considered. These are life changing diseases, when not life threatening diseases and patients' lives are altered forever.

Whatever therapeutic area Eisai considers we factor in patients needs beyond the drug alone. Even if we will not only talk about Alzheimer disease in the future but many other areas, who we are, our mission and how we want to embrace it will remain the same. This commitment is what makes us different from other companies and it's what we have to leverage in the industry.

Eisai has created an Alzheimer institute here in collaboration with Pfizer as well as invested in the French government's 'Plan Alzheimer'. In regard to 'Plan Alzheimer' several biotech companies have complained that it doesn't dedicate enough funds to fundamental research

tending instead to favour social healthcare needs. As a big donor to this program, what are your comments on these assertions?

The plan has succeeded in building up a very comprehensive approach to social and research issues in addition to epidemiological understanding of the disease. Sometimes we need to recognize what has been done rather than just complain about what should have or could have been. Today, the plan is obviously efficiently driven with operational objectives and we have seen concrete measures being taken which is not always the case in such initiatives. It may not cover 100% of the different aspects of this tremendously impactful disease, but the fact that we have seen direct measures come as a result of this plan is a good thing.

At the very beginning there was an inclination not to involve major pharmaceutical companies in the plan and make it an independent measure. While I understand the initial desire to keep it independent I also feel we have a lot to offer in terms of practical research on the subject and real understanding on the disease. The fact that we have been running an Institute for nearly ten years, in which many educational programs have been developed by the French major experts, makes us a strong partner, supporting the implementation of education measures in the area where we are already owning an expertise.

Many pieces of the French pharmaceutical industry appear to be suspicious of one another whether it's the biotech's scepticism of 'big pharma' while 'big pharma' seems to have an air of animosity between one another. Do you feel that the current reforms in France are lowering these industry barriers?

I don't really see the animosity between these two business models, Animosity comes clearly for me from the general population and the media whose vision of the pharmaceuticals, whether they are large or small is suspicious. We do have a poor image in the eyes of the general population who feel we only operate to earn money without any code of conduct or ethics.

What do you need to do then to change this image?

Communication is something we have somehow missed over the years, obviously, despite our efforts. Moreover, we have to clearly define what the goals, duties and roles are of all the actors in the health industry because uncertainty leads to suspicion.

The swine flu epidemic has been a very interesting case. In just a few months the pharmaceuticals have been capable to put some of their issues and priorities aside in order to meet the necessary vaccination demands. This is not a statement about whether or not the plan was relevant but the conclusion is that a plan was implemented, providing enough means, the industry producing enough in a very short period to make the population safe.

It's interesting to note however, that the first reaction to the swine flu was to label it as a pharmaceutical company's strategy to sell vaccines.

You've worked for a number of companies within the industry including Wyeth, Zeneca, Pharmacia and LFB running a wide array of business cultures. How do you feel your current organization is viewed in France, is it different than other multinational companies because it's Japanese?

I feel that Japanese companies are fundamentally different from Anglo-Saxon companies. Japanese groups are more discreet than their Anglo counterparts; a difference which likely comes from their culture and personality. Eisai is a Company that has been built over three generations and looks not only at the figures but who has primarily a strong fundamental mission, hhc, around which all employees are gathered. This represents a different way of managing and provides more visibility for those within the company. As a result of this culture it's easier for our employees to commit to the values of the company and invest themselves.

It's important to me to take part in the realisation of the company's vision and drive the French affiliate with the same amount of personal investment.

Dr. Paul Cadre established this subsidiary in France and was managing the group for over a decade leaving his own mark on the organization. You have been running the group since 2008; what are your goals for the future and how do you intend to leave your mark?

Currently, Eisai France is dealing heavily with life cycle management with the transition from Aricept to oncology and a wider epilepsy portfolio. The company has to undergo an in-depth transformation which will not happen by itself so it will be the work of top level management to guide it through this period.

Historically, Aricept has been a majority of our sales in France so we need in the future to learn how to become a company with three or more areas of interest which means we will no longer be a "niche" expert. We have to steer the company differently and define our priorities as we cannot put 100% of our resources in one therapeutic area. Moreover, this is an evolution from a retail market business to an hospital approach in oncology, and sepsis management, which is a different business all together.

France also fits within the European picture for Eisai which has been reorganized with a strong platform based in the UK spearheaded by the new European Knowledge Center (EKC). This is run by strong leadership and includes expert intelligence all in the name of creating a true European business for Eisai. This is very new for us as up until a few years ago the strategy was conducted mainly at the subsidiary level.

On top of this, one cannot forget the external environment and the ongoing reforms to the health system such as the HPST law and regional health agencies. This means new stakeholders for us and a new approach to selling drugs on the French market.

We need to open our eyes and convince ourselves that we will have to work differently tomorrow. This can be stressful for people because you don't know what exactly is on the horizon. However, I need to provide as much visibility as possible so people understand what is going on around them. The world is changing so one has to change oneself.

I feel that clear communication and guidance will be my fundamental mark on the affiliate. This demands a specific management type which involves people as much as possible through the transformation process. Change is not just relevant to Eisai; it's a model shift for the entire industry and most managers are internally investigating what the best configuration will be for tomorrow. On the other hand, it is key in such period to reinforce the sharing of our mission and values, as they are the fundamentals of who we are today. A company should never forget who it is and what it wants to be. Eisai France is building up a more creative and comprehensive business model, leaning on our achievements and addressing our needs to succeed in our future challenges. In a word, finding its own way in the Pharma transformation.

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