

Lundbeck Malaysia - Kin Sang Wong, Country Manager



15.09.2014

Tags: [CNS](#), [brain](#), [originator](#), [specialized medicine](#)

Lundbeck's country manager gives a thorough overview of CNS disorders in Malaysia and states: "It is important to remind everyone that mental health conditions or brain diseases are not to be overlooked." While this is a challenge, it also represents an opportunity for Lundbeck to provide best-in-line products to patients.

Lundbeck has been an important player in Southeast Asia, bringing innovative treatments to treat CNS disorders. Could you tell us about the company's mission in Malaysia and how the company has performed in this fast growing pharma industry?

Lundbeck Malaysia's vision is to improve the quality of life of patients with psychiatric and neurodegenerative disorders. We are driven by the desire to make a difference to people living with brain diseases. Awareness around psychiatric disorders has improved in the last years as we are seeing more patients coming to seek treatment. Yet, this is far from being sufficient as stigma around brain diseases is still present.

While patients come to receive initial treatment, treatment default rate is still a concern, as many do not follow these treatments until the end. Our objective is to ensure quality of life improvement for the sufferers and care-givers by getting patients to stay on treatment longer until treatment remission and also introducing the latest products that meet the present treatment unmet needs.

The wide range of medicines available for the prescribers and patients has proven to be efficient so far, but the journey to reduce the number of patients with brain disease is still challenging.

Growth in this dynamic market is difficult, with competition from generic and cost containment measures, but we are proud that we are still growing progressively. There has been a higher level of awareness and acceptance of brain diseases, which augurs well to the industry.

You were mentioning that in Asia, there is still a social stigma surrounding CNS disorders. Could you tell us more about the perception of CNS disorders here and how do you communicate around these diseases?

In line with our company vision we work closely with the medical community, especially the psychiatrists and neurologists in improving the management of brain diseases. We organize medical workshops focusing on young specialists, specialist trainees and medical officers assisting them in improving their management and treatment skills, as the earlier the disease is detected the better it can be managed. We also support patient groups.

We believe brain diseases like schizophrenia, bipolarity, depression, dementia and others should be treated the same as other diseases like hypertension, diabetes and cancer; it is important to manage these brain diseases the same way we manage any other disease. Although there is no cure for it, there are many treatment options available that help these sufferers to have better control on their lives.

The stigmatization is still there, but there are more open public discussions about brain diseases, like a recent radio program on bipolar disorders. Our policy makers are aware of the importance of brain diseases and are expanding the psychiatric services by placing more psychiatrists in government hospitals. Of course, more is required from both the policy makers and the public at large.

The 2020 WHO report states that, among the top five mental diseases, depression will be the most important disease. Therefore, if we manage to raise more awareness and have everyone on board, these brain diseases can be better managed.

Alcohol dependence is a worldwide phenomenon. How successful will Selincro, a drug that aims to reduce alcohol dependence, be on the market?

The drinking culture in Asia is very different from the European one. However, we do have a large drinking population in Malaysia and WHO reported it to be the tenth largest alcohol consumer in the world. Drinking is not a bad habit, but uncontrolled consumption of alcohol can lead to lots of

social, health and economic problems. Selincro allows the drinker to continue enjoying their drink in a controlled manner, hence improving their quality of life while at the same time minimizing the social, health and economic issues. It works by reducing the craving and specifically targeting people with alcohol dependence problems.

What is the importance of Lundbeck Malaysia for the Asian region specifically?

In the new Southeast Asian cluster region, which comprises eight countries (India, Pakistan, Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines) including Malaysia, our affiliate is ranked third. Considering our population of 30 million, we can be proud of our ranking when competing with very large markets like India and Indonesia. Our ambition to become the top CNS company in Malaysia has given us a great momentum since the start.

With a growing pressure from generics and an increasing demand for originator drugs from private hospitals, how is Lundbeck performing both on the public and private side?

The private sector definitely represents an area of interest for us, as patients spend out of pocket to receive drugs in private hospitals. Nonetheless, the public sector has been a key partner and has enabled us to sustain our growth over the years.

For instance, for the treatment of schizophrenia, 90 percent of treatments are based in the public sector. Since the treatment is long-term and expensive, most patients prefer staying on the public side while the depressed and bipolar patients have higher tendency to consult the private sector. In the private sector, where patient pays out of pocket, there are more treatment options for both the prescribers and patients to choose. Both sectors are equally important for us.

Lundbeck is still not in the top 30 companies in Malaysia. When can we expect this breach?

The reason we are not in this ranking is simply because we are a specialized company targeting CNS disorders, whereas companies like GSK, Novartis or MSD cover almost all therapeutic areas. Even though we target CNS disorders, we do not have at the moment all the drugs necessary to cover all these disorders. In the end it is not our intention to reach the size of these very large MNCs; we only want to focus on our business and make sure we help improve the quality of life of our patients.

For us to grow, we must introduce new products that meet the present un-met needs. Two new products have been launched globally and these are under registration in Malaysia at the moment.

It is important to remind everyone that mental health conditions or brain diseases are not to be overlooked. They represent a great deal of trauma and are expanding fast, but we want to reassure the people that there are means to significantly reduce their effects by using the right products and getting proper advice from qualified doctors. We are working hard on helping Malaysian patients with brain diseases and we believe that our new products will be an effective alternative in the management of these brain diseases, hence improving patients' quality of life.

To read more articles and interviews from Malaysia, and to download the latest free report on the country, [click here](#).

[See more interviews](#)