

# Interview: Ozkan Ozdogan - General Manager, Lilly, Egypt

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*With a large and growing population, and significant domestic health needs, Lilly Egypt general manager Ozkan Ozdogan sees many opportunities for various stakeholders to serve patients, and is focusing on improving healthcare practitioners' ability to better train diabetes patients to manage their condition.*

**After 14 years with Lilly Turkey in Istanbul, you arrived in Egypt in May 2015. After seven months on the ground, what is your assessment of Egypt and the Egyptian market relative to your past experience?**

In the Egyptian market, there is an increasing demand for healthcare services and pharmaceuticals, due to the significant prevalence of epidemic diseases like hepatitis C and diabetes, as well as strong demographics like a large and fast growing population. Egypt is the second largest pharmaceutical market in the MENA region, and is on track to nearly double in size between 2013 and 2018. Given the sheer volume and variety of unmet healthcare needs in Egypt, there are many opportunities for pharmaceutical companies and healthcare providers to serve patients. Furthermore, Egypt is an out-of-pocket market mainly for innovative products, so economic growth will directly support the pharmaceutical market. Thus, improvements in the economy are driving growth in the pharmaceutical sector, which also means that more patients will be able to access more innovative products.

The healthcare infrastructure in Egypt is in need of more investment and improvement; but we are seeing significant efforts from the government to improve the current system.

**What is your perspective on the government's recent efforts to expand patient access to innovative healthcare in Egypt?**

The government is currently trying to do their best to improve patient access to innovative medicines, especially for low-income individuals and families, by allocating resources for more innovative products than seen in the past, which is fantastic for these patients. The challenge is that the current public insurance system still does not cover all patients. So, it's great to see that the new Minister's first priority is to expand the coverage of Health Insurance in the country as well as the infrastructure of government hospitals which will lead better healthcare service to patients. The third priority is also very important: focusing on the healthcare provider's capabilities to improve the quality of the healthcare service. This matches our goal as Lilly.

**What was the mission or vision that you set out to achieve in Egypt when you took over as general manager of this affiliate?**

We have a global mission as Lilly, which is to make medicines that help people live longer, healthier and more active lives. Our company values are integrity, excellence and respect for people. These are consistent in every country that we operate in. We have promising & innovative medicine in the pipeline, especially in Oncology, Diabetes & Autoimmune diseases and we work closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to make it available for Egyptian patients and make their lives better. In order to achieve that, we need to improve our capabilities within the affiliate to ensure the right motivation, prioritization and resource allocation. Long registration timelines in Egypt is challenging but I believe that the recent improvements in registration processes will help innovative products to reach patients earlier. The ultimate goal of all healthcare stakeholders is to make the patient's life better and we all should work together to achieve this goal.

Finally, we work hard to improve our internal capabilities to help diabetic patients. In Egypt, there is a great unmet need in terms of patient's disease knowledge and awareness; as in many other countries in the region. Physicians can initiate the treatment, but it is crucial to educate the patients in order to make sure that they are compliant with their treatment regimen. Patients not being compliant with treatments due to lack of education can result in serious complications. Thus, we have created a separate team of medical educators to tackle this issue. Improving patient outcomes through education in diabetes is a major mission for Lilly worldwide. Since the production of the first insulin 90 years ago, Lilly has been a global leader in the fight against diabetes. "We

believe that while the right medication is key to managing and controlling this disease; educating people with diabetes, their families and healthcare professionals are also of primary importance. Therefore, we are trying to partner with the MOH to create training programs for healthcare providers. This collaboration has previously taken place in 2014 and 2015 which we plan to continue in 2016 as well.

**The Egyptian government has made it clear that they are working to create a business friendly environment, and that they will work to support multinational investment and participation in Egypt. What is Lilly's response to this invitation?**

Our business areas consist of diabetes, oncology, animal health, neuropsychiatry, bone diseases, and biomedicines. We are responding to this invitation by bringing new innovative products to the Egyptian market, and making the necessary investments to support that goal. Operating in this market is a conscious decision we have made that requires a lot of effort and dedication on behalf of Lilly, and we choose to continue operating because we still see opportunities to improve the lives of patients in this country.

**What will be the metrics or targets that you measure Lilly Egypt's success against in the coming years?**

We have a limited number of products in Egypt, so we are not pursuing the goal of being number one in the market. However, our primary focus is on how to make patients' lives better. Oftentimes we measure our success not in dollars, but in the number of lives we have impacted. Our actual achievement and impact on people lives can be much stronger than financial figures. We have a strong pipeline and innovative products which is again our target to bring them as early as to Egyptian patient's to make their lives better.

Another important metric is the "how" part. How we operate and reach our goals? It's vital for us to run all operations with the highest Ethics and Compliance standards.

**In retrospect, what were the key things you had to learn upon arriving in Egypt to effectively manage a business in this environment?**

Whenever you move to a new business environment you must consider the cultural differences and do your best to adapt them. You can't keep the same management style and expectations you have developed in your previous role and environment.

Secondly, you must of course learn the healthcare system in the country, pharmaceutical market dynamics, and regulations in order to be able to run the business.

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