Interview: Wojciech Koziejowski – Managing Director, Lundbeck Poland



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Wojciech Koziejowski, managing director of Lundbeck Poland, discusses attaining reimbursement in Poland for the first time in ten years and the recent set-up of their global shared service center of more than 200 staff in Krakow. Moreover, he highlights the leading role the company is taking in educating key stakeholders on CNS conditions, as well as the impact of their innovative treatments for patients.

As the country manager of Lundbeck in Poland, could you introduce our international readers to the current operations of the affiliate?

Our mission is to help and improve the quality of life of patients suffering from psychiatric and neurological disorders. The full extent of the brain conditions they suffer from is only fully understood by the patients and their families. In that regard, it is important for us as a company to highlight the overall importance of the innovation that Lundbeck provides in this niche therapeutic area that affects such a high number of people.

During my extensive career at Lundbeck, I have witnessed several new forms of our products, the most recent being Brintellix®. This product is extremely effective in its primary utilization of being an anti-depressant, while allowing better cognitive functions; meaning the improvement of cerebral activities that lead to improve knowledge, such as memory, retention of information and speed of thought. This is of paramount importance as many of our patients are younger, and this allows

them to conduct normal daily tasks to function in society, such as going to work.

Lundbeck is an extremely innovative company. What are the growth drivers within your portfolio?

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Brintellix® and Abilify Maintena® are our most innovative products; the latter being our first ever reimbursed product within the Polish market, having achieved this on September 1, 2016. The treatment was developed in collaboration with Otsuka, and is very effective in patients suffering from schizophrenia, especially those that are non-compliant to treatment.

Nevertheless, we want to see more of these drugs obtaining reimbursement moving forward, as they are highly needed by the patients. At the moment, the reach of our products is very restricted and makes it challenging for doctors and companies.

The reimbursement decision of one of your innovative products is big news. How has this milestone supported the commercial growth of the affiliate?

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We obtained the decision using risk-sharing agreements, and all innovative products in Poland gain market access using this model. We have been able to increase sales numbers by roughly 30 percent from last year. Next year, we expect this excellent growth to continue.

This shows a shift in the mindset of Poland to reward CNS innovation. What leading role is Lundbeck Poland playing to educate the broader network about the importance of treatment in this therapeutic area?

The company invests a lot into education with doctors, using them as a middle man between the company and the patients. This is significantly important for CNS conditions. For example, schizophrenic patients do not enjoy taking their treatments. As a result, many of them relapse when they reject taking the drug and after each relapse their condition gets considerably worse. In fact, after six relapse events, 97 percent of them are unable to work, making them a burden of society, socially and financially, as now they must receive welfare payments. Therefore, treatments, like our once-a-month injection, Abilify Maintena®, allows them to receive innovative products without changing their daily habits.

Additionally, every week we hold three meetings across Poland, where doctors can meet and discuss patient’s cases as well as exchange experiences and ideas. Also, Lundbeck delivers a

lecture on a chosen topic and supports national and international conferences. All these educational processes are not revolutionary changes, though we aim to be the premier partner of choice for all key stakeholders, so we are able to fulfil the company's mission of improving lives.

What have been the structural changes that have taken effect in Poland for Lundbeck over recent years?

More than three years ago, Lundbeck globallly made the decision to set up in Krakow the global shared service center that conducts HR, customer service, IT and financial services for 40 nations across the globe. This decision is based on the strategic geographical location of Poland but also on the great talent pool of people available in Poland. This has ensured that Lundbeck Poland has grown in importance for the company around the region and world, and the company is now seeing the great potential of the nation.

What has been the impact of the increased investments of Lundbeck in Poland?

Employing more than 200 staff at this center is a big change for us. There has been a recent proposal by the government to create better reimbursement conditions for companies that invest further into Poland. If this comes to fruition, this will help us a lot. On a global level, the strategic move to position operations in Poland has helped kick-start shares growth, and this has been further assisted by our strong pipeline.

What are the products in the pipeline you are excited to bring to Poland moving forward?

Rexulti® is an exciting product that has been recently launched in the US and Australia and treats both depression and schizophrenia. Furthermore, a third indication for Alzheimer's has shown promising results during phase-3 clinical trials. This is an amazing breakthrough; one pill that can treat three conditions, and possibly more as the brain is a very complex organ.

What are your aspirations for Lundbeck Poland?

Obviously, we want to gain reimbursement for Brintellix®, and we are actively showing its cognitive effects, while not influencing the patient´s sexual life. This is important as for young people this type of effect can increase depression. In Poland, only 2.7 percent of schizophrenic patients receive long acting treatment, and this must change to be in line with the rest of Europe.

In general, we want to see greater access to CNS medicines, though Poland first needs to take a more holistic approach to its healthcare system. Many sectors have a silo mindset and do not take

in the greater picture and look at the indirect impact of treatments.

You have worked at Lundbeck for nearly two decades now. What is it that continues driving you every day?

We are a very unique company that is very much people and values orientated. This allows us to work in an agile and flexible manner and make quick decisions. Furthermore, the patient centric approach allows us to focus on delivering our overriding mission of ensuring patients can live better lives.

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