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Berkeley Vincent, managing director of Janssen in the Nordics and Baltics, discusses the challenges of the digital future for the Swedish affiliate and the whole healthcare industry and highlights Janssen's strong involvement in the innovative Swedish R&D ecosystem. He also explains why Sweden is in a unique position to lead the world around data usage.

What was your motivation to come back to Sweden and lead Janssen's affiliate?

I have a very strong personal motivation; this is home to me. From a professional point of view, I worked in this region years ago and it left a great impression on me, both the people in the company and the environment they have created in the company. There is a strong commitment to health and well-being, which is something I relate to.

This is your first time as managing director for the Nordics and Baltics, how has been your experience so far?

It is interesting to compare what I left nine years ago to what I found when I came back. The countries are still engaged in the bigger topics of health, but the markets have moved away from each other. The access environment and political pressure are different now and that seems to be

driving differences in prescribing behaviours, in access to new medicines; there is more heterogeneity in the markets.

Can you give us an overview of Janssen's main growth drivers in the region?

Across the whole EMEA, and globally, medical innovations are our focus. Janssen brings transformational products and aims to radically move the standard of care forward in any of the diseases we operate in, and it translates to our business in the region. What is amazing about the Nordic countries is that they recognize it as a noble ambition, people want the best medicines and therapies to move forward.

The challenge, sometimes, is that it then pushes the frontier of our discussions around access and affordability. Obviously, if we are at that end of the spectrum, then we are also at the cutting edge of the discussion on how to make it sustainable.

Johnson & Johnson had stronger results than expected in the last quarter, thanks in good part to Janssen's performance. What has been the performance in the Nordics and Baltics, specifically?

We are broadly in line with how the company is growing, with a core of transformational products. There has been a focus on being much more specialized in specific diseases and we have seen the benefits of that, in terms of the strength of our portfolio's products. But it even influences our focus on partnerships here; we really want to know everything we can about diseases, for example, certain types of hematologic malignancies. That allows us to make much more meaningful partnerships with academia and the rest of the ecosystem since we provide deep expertise in specific areas. That is where the magic happens.

Could you go into detail on how you leverage the collaborative and innovative Swedish ecosystem?

We have a broad footprint in Sweden. Talking more broadly about Johnson & Johnson, we incorporate all of McNeil's OTC products and the large manufacturing facility in Helsingborg, where the group is a crucial member of the local economy, being one of the region's largest employer with more the 650 employees. The plant manufactures almost all the worldwide Nicorette nicotine

replacement therapy products.

From a specific Janssen perspective, the partnership with Karolinska Institutet is the most prominent example of a modern approach to partnering with key stakeholders; not only to help explain the opportunities of new therapies but also help society understand how those technologies get adopted, how we can diffuse the innovation through the system. I am proud to say that this research collaboration with Karolinska Institutet has also prompted replication studies in multiple countries in order to interpret Swedish results in a global context. We also have many other partnerships with academic institutions.

Around 20 percent of Janssen's global clinical trials have Nordic sites, with approximately 40 ongoing studies in Sweden. In a relatively small country of ten million people, having many patients undergoing studies shows how invested we are in this part of the world.

What makes Sweden an attractive country to conduct clinical studies?

There has been a change in recent years. There was a period of time where there was a big pressure on the productivity of R&D, but as our portfolio has gotten more complex and as the science advances, there is a bigger focus on the quality of the research developed. Fitting within modern standards of care is helping position Sweden as a good place to do research. As therapies get more complex, stronger and more robust research partners are needed. The country definitively stands out in that sense. This region, and Sweden in particular, has an outstanding potential to grow in clinical research thanks to its R&D tradition, healthcare system and unique registries.

To what extent can the affiliate be seen as an ideal place to launch innovative treatments?

It is true that Sweden remains amongst the first countries in which Janssen launches many new therapies, but it is worth pointing out the fact that it is not always as it is commonly understood in the Swedish healthcare environment, but also amongst patients. We have challenges to make sure the best medicines are available, and it is important for everybody to recognize that there are ways to open the country even more. Getting the best and latest technologies to patients is not a given.

Everywhere in Europe, we have to have a strong discussion around sustainability and managing healthcare budgets better across the population. As a company that focuses on bringing pioneering new medicine, we need to ensure the availability of good treatments. There have been changes in the system over the years that have made the conversation longer and harder to complete. Therefore, we need to address these challenges by bringing more clarity on the evaluation processes for introduction of new drugs, better national and regional infrastructure for sharing patient outcome data and quicker and better ways of evaluating new treatment options (indication based).

Even though Sweden has the highest five-year cancer survival rate in Europe, do you still perceive an appetite from authorities to continue embracing the latest innovation in the oncology field?

Yes, but those types of technologies are a very good case study in how we cannot lose focus. There are a lot of new ways of working and treatment that, for example, cell therapy creates. It also puts pressure on Janssen to be able to meet those demands, but it also asks a lot of the system. We are happy to be at the forefront of the conversation because it is where we can contribute the most.

The point is that there should not be complacency on either side. This continuous drive to have the best therapies puts pressure on everybody to assess if we have the best systems, processes for approvals, and if the speed keeps up with the technology.

How does Janssen leverage Sweden's quality registries and this large amount of data available?

That is at the heart of our partnership with the Karolinska Institutet. Janssen has been deeply engaged with them since 2015 to go very deep in understanding diseases. We are in the process of enriching the relationship and remain committed because it is a key part of our global R&D efforts. The goal with all the data sets is to see how we can go further, there are always more questions than what a given data set answers; the challenge is to evolve the partnerships and our own technique. We want to further examine how patients respond to treatments in real-world settings and evaluate a wide range of factors, including clinical, quality-of-life, social, and economic criteria, in order to predict the risk of an individual to be diagnosed with a disease. That is the beauty of science, there is always a next question to be answered.

It speaks to the strengths of the Swedish system, but we also must note that Denmark and the other Nordic countries are also working to improve their data. There is a broad sense of appreciation in the region around the power of data.

The future is going towards more data, a focus on health rather than disease, more focus on sustainable management, whether that is the environment or the economy, and it is important to say that Sweden is doing pretty well on almost all those measures. It is not perfect, there are challenges, but the model here continues to add great value to its citizens. From a business point of view, it gives us an open and innovative place to do business.

Jenni Nordborg from the government's Life Sciences Office said that one of the priorities for her is to better implement digitalization in Sweden. How can Janssen become the partner of choice in this area?

There are a thousand ways to think about what digitalization means; I would pick two specific areas. The first one goes back at the real-world evidence and how we manage data; it is a fundamental aspect moving forward. All the systems are recognizing that they must get better at sharing data to release their full potential. The second one is about the implications for our business model. There are ways to use data, so we become more relevant to prescribers and decision-makers, there are opportunities to revolutionize our commercial model.

How do you implement Janssen's patient-centric approach in the affiliate?

What I like about the Johnson & Johnson credo and the Nordic culture is that it is a real and heartfelt commitment to individual patients. There is a strong clarity in the business that when we talk about patients, we talk about ourselves and our loved ones. We take that commitment very seriously; it is a cultural commitment to do right by the people we care about. Janssen collaborates with different patient organizations, for example within the areas of haematology, solid tumour and immunology, in the region in several areas to support them and highlight what their needs are.

What is your vision of Janssen in the next five years?

Hopefully, Janssen will be able to crack the code around data; it is fundamental to the industry's next step. If we are going to crack it anywhere, Sweden has an amazing window of opportunity; the

conditions here are optimal. I hope that in five years people will see a data-driven environment that puts forward the best therapies in record times. That would be a dream.

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