

# Faisal BinDail - General Manager, Baxter Saudi Arabia

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*Baxter Saudi Arabia GM Faisal BinDail shares some insights into the renal care specialist's local manufacturing hub, the sole manufacturing site for peritoneal dialysis products in the Middle East, and the company's plans to expand its reach in Saudi Arabia and the broader region.*

**Can you start by introducing yourself and providing an overview of your experience with Baxter?**

Prior to joining Baxter, I have had the opportunity to work with various multinational and regional pharmaceutical companies, as well as a stint in the insurance sector. At Baxter, I oversee the management of our joint venture here in Saudi Arabia.

Speaking of Baxter's journey, it spans back several decades, but in the last 15 years, there has been a significant evolution. We made a strategic decision to establish a manufacturing facility and embark on a joint venture. This partnership with the renowned Olayan Group, has allowed us to manufacture our products locally in Saudi Arabia and expand our reach to neighbouring countries such as Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, UAE, and Lebanon, with plans underway for Iraq and Jordan.

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Our manufacturing hub in Saudi Arabia has proven to be a tremendous success, especially in the field of peritoneal dialysis, where we hold an impressive 90 percent market share. Peritoneal dialysis offers patients with renal failure the convenience of receiving treatment at home, and we currently serve over 2000 patients in Saudi Arabia alone. One of our key strengths lies in our commitment to delivering our products directly to patients's homes across the vast landscape of Saudi Arabia, ensuring accessibility and convenience for all. This approach significantly enhances the quality of life for patients, allowing them to undergo dialysis comfortably in their own homes rather than commuting to hospitals.

Since joining Baxter in 2020, we have witnessed remarkable progress in sales and market penetration, particularly as we have expanded our presence beyond major cities to the northern and southern regions of Saudi Arabia, tapping into the immense potential that this market offers. In summary, Baxter's commitment to innovation and patient-centric care continues to drive our success and growth in the region.

### **What have been some of the key milestones during your nearly four-year tenure at Baxter?**

Over the past four years, we have achieved several significant milestones, particularly in refining our operating model and enhancing our manufacturing capabilities. One notable achievement has been our focus on the production of peritoneal dialysis solutions, a critical component in our patient care offerings. Currently, we manufacture these solutions locally, ensuring quality and accessibility for patients in need, while we import the dialysis machines.

Our strong partnership with the National Unified Procurement Company (NUPCO) facilitates seamless collaboration and distribution of our products, primarily to government healthcare facilities. Given that the treatment for the diseases we address is predominantly supported by the government, our efforts are primarily directed towards serving this sector effectively. This strategic alignment has enabled us to optimize our operations and ensure that our products reach those who need them most.

### **Could you provide insight into Baxter's diverse portfolio beyond dialysis, which we understand to be a core aspect of the business?**

While dialysis represents a significant portion of Baxter's business, it is essential to note that we operate across multiple business units, each contributing to our comprehensive portfolio. However, it's worth mentioning that there have been recent developments in our organizational structure. At the beginning of 2023, it was decided that Baxter would undergo a spin-off, where renal care would become part of a new entity called Vantive. Moving forward, Baxter will focus on a select group of products, representing approximately 5 percent of our portfolio, with the majority of our business remaining within the realm of renal care. This strategic move allows us to streamline our operations and concentrate our efforts on our core strengths. While these changes are significant globally, the impact on our operations in Saudi Arabia may vary slightly.

### **As a leading company in renal care, could you elaborate on the specific needs of patients in Saudi Arabia and how Baxter is addressing these needs?**

In Saudi Arabia, we are facing a significant challenge with over 20,000 patients suffering from kidney failure, primarily attributed to the high incidence of diabetes. Diabetes poses a considerable risk to kidney health, among other complications affecting the heart and eyes. Unfortunately, inadequate control of blood sugar levels often leads to renal failure. Despite this concerning trend, Baxter is committed to providing access to dialysis treatment for all patients in Saudi Arabia. The Ministry of Health offers our products and services free of charge to patients, ensuring that they receive the care they need.

We are witnessing an average annual growth rate of nearly 6 percent in renal failure patients, surpassing market expectations. One key advantage we offer is an enhanced quality of life for patients undergoing dialysis, particularly with our focus on enabling home-based treatment options. This approach empowers patients to manage their condition in the comfort of their own homes, enhancing convenience and improving overall well-being.

**Could you provide insights into the healthcare delivery system in Saudi Arabia for those who may not be familiar with it?**

Healthcare services in Saudi Arabia are provided free of charge, with a diverse range of hospitals and facilities under the umbrella of the Ministry of Health. Additionally, there are military hospitals, university hospitals, and specialized institutions such as the King Faisal Specialist Hospital, each offering tertiary care services. These services are available to all citizens, as well as expatriates working in the private sector, who are required to have insurance coverage provided by their employers.

Private hospitals, such as Al Habib Hospital and Saudi German Hospital, cater to individuals preferring private healthcare services and are also utilized by expatriates. However, individuals working in the government sector have the option to access Ministry of Health hospitals or other government-run facilities. This comprehensive healthcare system ensures access to quality medical care for all residents of Saudi Arabia, regardless of their employment status.

**With significant investments planned by the government to develop healthcare infrastructure, along with a push towards privatization and digitalization of healthcare services, how does Baxter, as a global leader in renal care and home healthcare, envision its role in advancing this agenda?**

Our progress in Saudi Arabia has been remarkable, particularly with our innovative approach to home healthcare. One key advantage we offer is our state-of-the-art dialysis machines, which are seamlessly integrated into hospital systems, allowing nephrologists and healthcare providers to remotely monitor patient treatments in real-time. This online connectivity ensures that patients receive timely and accurate care, while also enabling healthcare professionals to adhere to treatment guidelines more effectively.

With this technology in place, patients no longer need to travel back and forth to hospitals for routine check-ups, significantly enhancing their overall experience and convenience. Additionally, our focus on eHealth services aligns perfectly with the government's vision for digitalization in healthcare. By leveraging our expertise in renal care and home healthcare, Baxter is well-positioned to support Saudi Arabia's healthcare transformation by delivering innovative solutions that improve patient outcomes and access to quality care.

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**Regarding personalization and digitalization in healthcare, could you elaborate on Baxter's plans to leverage data collection, digitalization, and AI technologies?**

We are actively utilizing a software called Sharesource, which facilitates remote patient monitoring (RPM). This technology allows us to collect and analyze patient data in real-time, enabling healthcare providers to monitor and manage patient treatments more effectively. Furthermore, we are continuously enhancing this software to incorporate AI capabilities, making it smarter and more intuitive. By leveraging AI algorithms, Sharesource can provide physicians and nurses with clearer insights and easy-to-understand graphics, allowing them to identify gaps or issues in patient care more efficiently. This development is particularly beneficial for dialysis units, as it enhances the performance of dialysis treatments and improves overall patient outcomes. As we continue to invest in digitalization and AI technologies, Baxter is committed to advancing personalized healthcare solutions that empower both patients and healthcare professionals.

**Considering the shift towards delivering comprehensive solutions rather than just products, how does Baxter envision expanding its services in the future, particularly in terms of providing greater access to dialysis treatments and products across Saudi Arabia?**

Moving forward, our focus is on expanding our presence in Saudi Arabia to meet the growing demand for our services. This includes plans to expand our manufacturing site to accommodate current and anticipated future demand. With the population expected to increase, particularly in Riyadh, we anticipate a corresponding rise in demand for our products and services. Therefore, we are committed to enhancing our manufacturing capabilities to ensure that we can meet the needs of patients across the country effectively. This expansion aligns with our commitment to providing accessible and comprehensive healthcare solutions to all residents of Saudi Arabia, regardless of their location or circumstances.

**Could you shed some light on the significance of Saudi Arabia for Baxter on a regional and global scale, particularly considering its strategic importance in manufacturing and market opportunities?**

Saudi Arabia holds considerable importance for Baxter on both regional and global fronts. Our top management views Saudi Arabia as a pivotal market, evidenced by our status as the sole manufacturing site for peritoneal dialysis products in the Middle East. While Baxter maintains numerous manufacturing sites in Europe and the US, our presence in the Middle East is unique, underscoring the strategic significance of the region.

Additionally, we are currently in the process of expanding our manufacturing capabilities, marking the largest investment by Baxter Company Limited in over 15 years. This investment reflects our commitment to delivering high-quality healthcare solutions in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, our data indicates that patients undergoing peritoneal dialysis in Saudi Arabia exhibit exceptional therapy adherence, with treatment durations exceeding 36 months compared to the global average of 24 months. This highlights the effectiveness of our products and services in the region, further emphasizing the importance of Saudi Arabia as a key market for Baxter.

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## **How does Baxter contribute to building local capacity and nurturing talent in Saudi Arabia, particularly in light of the ongoing healthcare transformation?**

Baxter is deeply committed to fostering local talent and building capacity within Saudi Arabia's healthcare sector. We prioritize education and development initiatives for both our team members and healthcare professionals in hospitals. Through structured and approved training courses, we provide comprehensive education on peritoneal dialysis to nephrologists and nurses, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver quality care. Additionally, we have established Saudi Arabia as a hub for training, facilitating regional events where local talent can participate and educate others about our products. By investing in local talent and education, Baxter aims to not only expand its manufacturing site but also contribute significantly to the ongoing healthcare transformation in Saudi Arabia.

## **Could you outline Baxter's commitment to supporting Saudi Arabia's national biotech strategy and achieving the country's healthcare goals, particularly in terms of localization, manufacturing, and prevention-focused initiatives?**

At Baxter, our mission is to sustain lives, and we take this commitment very seriously. We recognize the importance of aligning with Saudi Arabia's vision 2030 and the national biotech strategy to enhance healthcare infrastructure and improve patient outcomes. Our focus on localization and manufacturing expansion underscores our dedication to supporting the country's goals. By investing in manufacturing capabilities within Saudi Arabia, we not only contribute to economic growth but also ensure timely access to life-saving treatments for patients across the country. Additionally, our emphasis on prevention-focused initiatives, aligns with the country's healthcare priorities and reflects our commitment to providing innovative solutions that improve patient care. We understand the significance of our role in delivering products to patients wherever they may be, and we are proud to implement delivery systems that ensure accessibility and convenience, even in remote areas. While this delivery model is implemented globally, its success in Saudi Arabia highlights the importance of tailored approaches to meet the unique needs of each region. Ultimately, Baxter remains steadfast in our commitment to supporting Saudi Arabia's healthcare transformation and improving the lives of patients throughout the country.

## **Looking ahead to the next three to five years, what are your aspirations and goals for Baxter in Saudi Arabia?**

In the coming years, our primary focus is on expanding our reach and impact in Saudi Arabia. We aim to provide our services to a larger number of patients, ensuring that we meet the growing demand for healthcare solutions in the region. This includes enhancing our manufacturing facility to increase capacity and meet the needs of patients not only in Saudi Arabia but also in neighboring GCC countries. Additionally, we are committed to increasing the penetration of peritoneal dialysis in Saudi Arabia, as we believe there is still untapped potential to provide this life-saving treatment to more patients.

As for talent development within our team, our goal is to empower our employees to become experts in their field. Our team plays a crucial role in the success of PD in Saudi Arabia, serving as advisors to healthcare professionals and providing continuous support to patients. We aim to provide our team with the resources and training they need to excel in their roles, ensuring that they can effectively bridge the gap between patients and healthcare providers, ultimately delivering the best possible care.

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**What would you like to communicate to key stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Health, media, and our international audience, regarding Baxter's presence and impact in Saudi Arabia?**

Our foremost objective is to uphold Baxter's esteemed reputation as a trusted leader in peritoneal dialysis (PD). We are dedicated to ensuring that this trust continues to resonate throughout the healthcare community in Saudi Arabia and beyond. Reputation is delicate, and we understand the profound consequences of failing to maintain it—patient lives are at stake. Therefore, our commitment to excellence remains unwavering. We strive to be the partner of choice for healthcare professionals, known for our dedication to patient care and our relentless pursuit of innovation. Baxter's reputation for excellence in PD remains steadfast, and we are committed to upholding this standard each day.

**Considering Baxter's reliance on partnerships with key stakeholders such as hospitals and healthcare providers, what values do you believe are essential to convey on behalf of Baxter?**

At Baxter, we hold a deep appreciation for ethics and integrity in all aspects of our work. We recognize the trust placed in us by both patients and physicians, and we are committed to upholding this trust through our actions. I vividly recall an encounter shortly after joining Baxter, where a father expressed his gratitude for the lifesaving services provided to his son, who was suffering from renal failure. This moment underscored the immense responsibility we bear in delivering vital healthcare solutions. Every month, patients rely on us to deliver the products they need to sustain their lives—a responsibility we do not take lightly. It is a reminder of the profound impact we have on individuals and families, driving us to prioritize excellence and integrity in everything we do.

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