

Interview: Jenny Wright â?? Managing Director, Galderma South Africa



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The managing director of Galderma South Africa, Jenny Wright reveals the importance of the dermatology sector within the country's healthcare system, as well as the role Galderma is playing in bringing dermatological solutions to the market and raising awareness of skin diseases. She also illustrates the factors that have truly allowed the company to remain the dermatology partner of choice among doctors and pharmacists in the country.

To begin, Jenny, the currently underserved and overburdened public healthcare system has prompted the creation of the Public Healthcare Enhancement Fund (PHEF) as depicted by Nkaki Matlala. To this end, can you please describe the initial aspirations behind Galderma's participation in this initiative and the type of impact you envision this fund having on the broader community?

We wanted to make an important contribution to the healthcare sector in South Africa, but lacked the scale to make a significant impact. However, together with the big pharmaceutical players, we can make a difference through one unified front. It comes down to UBUNTU, meaning, "together we are so much more." We were one of the original members involved in the PHEF, which is a great platform to meaningfully contribute to the future of healthcare in South Africa. We are therefore extremely serious about this initiative. The larger companies have dedicated people involved and can invest more time than Galderma, which is a smaller company without the same capacity of people. However, as a member of the PHEF, I know that there are committed, incredibly well qualified people involved in moving the fund forward. The initial commitment period was three years, but for all of us, it is a continued initiative in shaping a better healthcare system in South Africa.

From your point of view, how would you evaluate the impact of the fund so far?

We regularly get reports with specific feedback on the four projects we are working on and there has been good success shown thus far. Facilitating the increase in medical doctors being trained, researcher development and indeed, the lack of leadership and management skills in governmental hospitals have been critical points to be addressed. As a public private health initiative, we always make sure to understand the needs of the Minister of Health and the country and determine the most effective ways of addressing these needs together.

From the perspective of a foreign company, how do you see the role of multinationals in improving the local infrastructure in the community and access to healthcare? Is it more of a requirement or a moral obligation?

We cannot say it is a moral obligation, as it is our desire and choice to do it. Galderma is committed for the long run, and we want to do everything we possibly can to improve South African healthcare. Looking specifically at Galderma, our involvement in state hospitals only comprises 1% of our business. Understandably, when it comes to allocating funds for various treatments, life-threatening diseases are generally prioritized over dermatological diseases such as acne which is our forte. Whilst our involvement in the public sector is limited from a product penetration perspective,

we're committed to the future of dermatology in South Africa at the medical education and training level and by bringing novel solutions to ensure optimal skin health in the private sector.

There are currently only 173 dermatologists in private practice in South Africa and 262 in total. Those numbers are extremely low in comparison to those in other countries where they have thousands of dermatologists. The academic hospitals are where the new dermatologists of the future get trained – we strive to provide them with all of the resources that the global Galderma organization has to offer. Although more focused on tackling the heavy burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, the country is also plagued with a vast spectrum of skin diseases – many of which are left undiagnosed given the current shortage of dermatologists. We consider it our role to support comprehensive training, for all healthcare practitioners to effectively enable widespread medical consultations for the general population. Considering the limitations of the Medicines Control Council (MCC), the availability of new pharmaceutical products is relatively scarce on our end. In fact, we're about to launch a new prescription product early next year – the first in roughly eight years. So, in the meantime, we've diversified our efforts and pursued other avenues to positively impact the community.

What value does the company's self-medication line of business bring your consumers?

There is a trend worldwide towards self-medicating, which ultimately relieves some of the burden on the health care system both financially and in terms of resources such as doctor's time. A good skincare regime helps to protect the integrity of our skin. Our self-medication products play an important role as the first line of protection for people's skin exposing an opportunity for the wider population to have access to good skincare. For example in terms of cleansers, the alkaline in some soaps can actually break down the barrier of the skin – predisposing people to infections. Our products make sure that people's skins are treated with the proper levels of protection and relief from top to toe.

Especially in Africa, sun protection is a huge component of our business. We recently started an initiative in partnership with the Dermatology Society of SA, focused on raising the awareness of melanoma among airline pilots. A global study showed that airline pilots have double the incidence of skin cancers (melanoma and non-melanoma cancers) than the rest of the population, as they are inherently more exposed to harmful UV rays being at high altitudes. In conjunction with the Airline Pilots' Association in South Africa (ALPA-SA) and the President of the Dermatology Society, Dr Dagmar Whitaker, we conducted free screening of 60 pilots, of which 56 required referrals to a dermatologist for further consultation and treatment. Skin cancer should be taken extremely seriously and Galderma's aim is to provide reliable high protection products and preventative education to fight against it.

Which segments of the company's portfolio will display the most promising demand prospects moving forward?

On a global scale, Galderma invests 19% of its turnover in R&D, across all our sectors of the business including pharmaceuticals, self-medication, and aesthetics. So, although the growth drivers in medicines will likely remain in acne, we're looking forward to introducing innovative new OTC products and medical devices to the market. We currently have a healthy pipeline of medicinal products, but, given the relatively long registration timelines, we will only be able to commercialize these products around 2019 – starkly contrasting the regulatory environment for medical devices and therapeutic skincare. Since there are no registration requirements at this time, we're able to launch these products into the market far more quickly.

That being said, however, regulatory governance for Medical Devices is imminent. Weâ??re currently collaborating with Innovative Pharmaceutical Association of South Africa (IPASA) and the South African Medical Device Industry Association (SAMEDI) and to ensure that these pending protocols are harmonized with European and American standards, while also catering to the industryâ??s overall interests and sustainable development.

From your discussions with healthcare practitioners, what are the most pervasive or prevalent trends in terms of dermatological diseases?

Acne affects 85% of teenagers worldwide and is therefore one of the most pervasive skin diseases, even in South Africa. Even though there are some excellent acne products on the market, there are still acne sufferers who do not find the resolution they need. At Galderma, we are constantly working on addressing these shortcomings, significantly investing in R&D specifically in this regard. Overseas, rosacea is very common and Galderma has new highly effective treatments, but there is far less need for these products in South Africa, as this disease generally only afflicts very fair-skinned people. In order to ensure continued success, we have to look at some solutions specifically tailored for South Africa. Especially considering that our products generally cater to higher living standard measures (LSMs), weâ??ll be looking to offer more affordable products, especially with regards to self-medication, that can be used by the majority of the population. As an affiliate, this is critical for our future and we are currently working on adapting our portfolio to increase access for a broader range of LSMs.

Given your experience in this industry, what are the key considerations when trying to create a brand identity for your products within the South African landscape?

Traditionally, we have a strong medical heritage. Our products have been promoted to healthcare practitioners, including doctors and pharmacists, as it is imperative to obtain endorsements and recommendations from medical professionalsâ??a practice that will continue moving forward. On a global level, however, Galderma in the last two to three years has started promoting brands directly to the broader skincare consumerâ??especially with the promotion of prominent OTC brands such as Benzac or Cetaphil for example. That being said, however, we are not a cosmetics company, but a company that provides science-based solutions. So, weâ??ll always have extensive investments in R&D and clinical trials underlying all of our products and supporting our medical heritage.

How much has the affiliate progressed under your leadership as managing director?

Galderma South Africa has been in the country since 1996, and was still quite small when I joined in 2001. I am very proud to say that we have grown ten times over the last 14 years, even without the launch of many new productsâ??a common strategy for accelerating growth. The base growth has been phenomenal, with turnover substantially expanding by double digits year after year. We have a very specific business model that concentrates on enabling our core competencies, while outsourcing other aspects. Weâ??re a primarily sales and marketing driven organization that establishes strong and reliable partnerships to help drive our successâ??whether itâ??s our black economic empowerment (BEE) partners for local manufacturing or a company like Imperial Health Sciences (IHS) for distribution. Overall, all of the processes or procedures outsourced or not, are consistently in compliance with Galdermaâ??s global operating standardsâ??never wavering in levels of excellence or quality assurance.

What factors ultimately motivated you to maintain such a longstanding tenure in this industry?

It comes down to my passion for healthy skin â?? dermatology. I originally started at Fisons, an allergy-focused pharma company that possessed the marketing and distribution rights for several

anti-fungal products. Leveraging my background as a microbiologist, the company put me in roles that effectively developed my skills in sales and marketing and provided me with exposure to different therapeutic areas including Dermatology. I then joined Roche Products where I was fortunate to start the Dermacare Team focusing specifically in this area. The skin is the largest organ of the body and if it is compromised in anyway, it has a profound effect on a person's psyche and life. Being able to make a difference in people's lives by providing solutions to achieve and maintain overall skin health is important to me. Moving to Galderma, a company exclusively dedicated to Dermatology ultimately resonated well with my passions, and I simply cannot see myself working in another therapeutic area or indeed another company. I have had many opportunities in my life to work abroad, but it has always been my absolute choice to remain here because I believe in the continued growth opportunities for this subsidiary and in the future of South Africa.

Looking forward the next three to five years, where would you like to have positioned Galderma SA?

Galderma is considered one of the top leaders in dermatology by doctors and pharmacists worldwide. Recently, there have been landmark publications from the World Health Organization and the World Economic Forum highlighting skin health as a key component to enabling healthy active ageing, this is aligned with our Galderma vision of holistic healthcare and our long-term strategy, to enhance quality of life by delivering science-based solutions for the health of skin, hair and nails over the course of people's lives. In South Africa, our aim is to drive awareness of our brands and the value they offer our consumers to firmly establish our leadership in the broader skin health market in the coming years. It will require launching new brands to strengthen and build our product portfolio, while remaining a true partner to our business stakeholders in providing expertise and support to drive the importance of a healthy skin for all.

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