

"We support India's target of TB elimination by 2025"

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US-based leading molecular diagnostics company, Cepheid Inc. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Danaher) unveiled its newest configuration in the GeneXpert family of systems, the GeneXpert Edge, in India recently.



The company has announced its 'Make in India' initiative by announcing plans to establish their manufacturing footprint in the country for Xpert® MTB/RIF test cartridges which run on the GeneXpert® System. More than 1,200 Cepheid's GeneXpert Systems have been installed in the last 2 years at various Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program (RNTCP) sites in the country and more than 2.5 million cartridges were supplied last year at various centres of Central TB Division (CTD). The GeneXpert® Edge is expected to be available in India later this year.

*In regard to this development, BioSpectrum interacted with **Peter Farrell**, Executive Vice President, Worldwide Commercial Operations, Cepheid and **Jai Shankar Krishnan**, President and CEO, India and Southeast Asia, Danaher to get more insights-*

Edited Excerpts-

What are the major plans lined up following the recent launch of GeneXpert® Edge in India?

Peter Farrell: There are more than 850,000 cases of TB each year in India that are either undetected or improperly treated.

GeneXpert Edge is a portable, easy-to-use testing system that brings testing closer to patients with the goal to diagnose the number of missing TB cases, enabling a test and treat approach in one visit. Cepheid is continuing to collaborate with the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program of the Government of India (GOI) to extend the reach in the peripheral centres which becomes significantly easier with the introduction of GeneXpert Edge. We have already initiated the validation of GeneXpert Edge and are all set to launch in India. The decentralized test will have the same quality as the ones done with GeneXpert all across the country, using Xpert MTB/RIF a WHO prequalified test.

Tell us something about the Make in India initiative recently announced by the company. Are there any major collaborations taking place for this purpose?

Jai Shankar Krishnan: Cepheid is committed to support the government's target of TB elimination by 2025 and is taking significant steps to anchor a local manufacturing presence for Xpert® MTB/RIF. The company has long been an active participant in the global fight against TB and is bolstering that commitment behind the 'MAKE IN INDIA' campaign to help accelerate the goal of a TB-free India. Cepheid is currently at an advanced stage of finalizing the location for the India manufacturing site. Today Danaher has a strong manufacturing footprint in India, thus partnering with the existing Danaher sites is also being evaluated. The site would be dedicated to the development of Xpert MTB/RIF test cartridges to begin with. Once the site is finalized, we will also work out details for employment opportunities

The company has been following an inorganic growth model for many years. What key strategies are followed for the business growth in India?

Peter Farrell: We continue to work closely with key govt. departments like the CTD (Central TB Division), and important stakeholders like WHO, The Union, FIND, CHAI, other NGOs and private partners to bring the country best in class testing solutions. We have increased our investment in India over the years, first through distribution partnerships, then by developing a local organisation with a direct Cepheid presence and now establishing a manufacturing footprint for our Xpert® MTB/RIF test to fully support the government's target of TB elimination by 2025. Cepheid is also committed to enhancing its presence in India by localizing many of its functions, and bringing to the Indian market, products customized to the local needs. We are currently focused on setting up our first manufacturing facility in India and will continue to evaluate further expansion based on market requirements.

What percent of the company's global revenue is contributed by the life sciences & diagnostic sector in India?

Jai Shankar Krishnan: India is one of Danaher's fastest growing regions. Cepheid is an integral part of Danaher's Life Sciences and Diagnostics portfolio. The global contribution from Life Sciences and Diagnostics platform is 38% and the India portfolio also mirrors the same.