"IDREAM hub will further support the thriving start-up culture in India"

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AstraZeneca is committed to strengthen innovation in healthcare in India

In 2018, global pharma company AstraZeneca launched IDREAM as an external collaboration platform in R&D, education, technology, and government affairs in Russia, Brazil and Taiwan. This initiative highlights the company's ambitious drive to create an integrated science ecosystem across the international region. A year later in April 2019, the company brought out the project to India building on the foundation of the bilateral Innovation Partnership between India and Sweden. Following up on this, BioSpectrum interacted with Nipun Jain, Innovation, Co Lead, AstraZeneca India to find out more about the company's plans in this regard.

Edited Excerpts-

What led AstraZeneca to start IDREAM in India?

The IDREAM hub in India was established as part of the recent expansion of our strategic collaborations to address the rising burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the country, building on the foundation of the bilateral Innovation Partnership between India and Sweden in 2018. It will complement our strategic partnership with the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), enabling us to run an accelerator for health start-ups in collaboration with NASSCOM's Centre of Excellence for Internet of Things, the largest platform for deep tech innovation in India. This IDREAM hub will further support the thriving start-up culture in India, enabling us to mentor innovative solutions that can drive better patient outcomes.

How will this initiative enable access to healthcare?

The IDREAM initiative has been designed to accelerate innovative tech solutions for early screening and management of NCDs, such as remote screening methods, point of care diagnostics and digital solutions that enable efficient data capture. AstraZeneca has identified three technological solutions that can impact patient care and delivery in India. These companies are:

- ten3T: A Smart Patch real-time monitoring device which measures 6 Lead ECG, pulse, respiration and temperature
- Predible Health: A deep-learning based software for the detection and diagnosis of lung nodules from CT imaging
- Pathshodh: A Point-of-care device capable of performing tests for multiple analytes on a single platform

Data today is becoming an extremely important commodity and the area of medicine is no different. IoMT or Internet of Medical Things and Big data are the future of health care and such technologies enable real-time clinical trial monitoring and facilitate data-sharing between research groups, clinicians, pharmaceutical companies and clinical research organisations (CROs) and the patients themselves.

How does AstraZeneca plan to launch these next generation solutions in healthcare?

As a part of the IDREAM initiative, AstraZeneca and its partners, Business Sweden, The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM), Atal Innovation Mission-Niti Aayog and AGNIi, collaborated to launch the Unnati Healthcare Innovation Challenge - an on-ground collaboration, through user-case driven innovation challenges some time back. At the same time, AstraZeneca launched a strategic partnership with the NASSCOM IoT Centre of Excellence to set up an accelerator programme to enable Indian start-ups develop new innovative solutions to NCD care in India and beyond. 90+ healthcare start-ups from across the country participated in this challenge; the shortlisted participants were then invited to present their ideas at the Unnati Healthcare day, of which three innovative start-ups were declared winners. Astrazeneca hopes to help each of these start-ups get to market by mentoring them, assisting them with necessary licenses, and helping them scale as required. The startups will have access to NASSCOM's innovation labs, development resources, cloud services and mentoring support from NASSCOM and Astrazeneca including the opportunity to showcase their innovations in national and global platforms where the latter can showcase their products or services.

Can healthcare innovation in India be strengthened through industry- academia collaboration?

As a science-led organisation, AstraZeneca is committed to strengthen innovation in healthcare in India. As India has some of the best scientific and technical resources globally Astrazeneca's effort to collaborate with academia, the government, start-up eco-system and industry partners will help achieve the shared vision of making meaningful interventions in improving the lives of patients impacted by Non-Communicable diseases in India.