BioSpect
the business of Bi
24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.co

â??We leverage India as a market for supplying great talent for Stryker and doing great R&D workâ?•

01 September 2022 | Interviews | By Dr Manbeena Chawla

Stryker, one of the worldâ??s leading medical technology companies headquartered in the US, has opened its new research and development facility, Strykerâ??s Global Technology Centre (SGTC), at the International Tech Park, Gurugram. The 150,000-square-foot facility is intended to accelerate innovation in India and globally, and further support the companyâ??s mission to make healthcare better. In conversation with BioSpectrum, Ram Rangarajan, Vice President, SGTC â?? R&D, Stryker reveals more about the new centre. Edited excerpts-



Please share more details about the Stryker Global Technology Centre (SGTC) in Gurugram?

We have a strong portfolio of innovative products and services in Medical and Surgical, Neurotechnology, Orthopaedics and Spine that help improve patient and hospital outcomes. The recently launched SGTC in Gurugram is a testament towards our vision of making healthcare better in India. The 150,000 sq ft facility is one of the leading strategic innovation hubs for Stryker that will develop and deliver innovative products and solutions for India and other markets globally. It houses over 25 state-of-the art product and clinical labs spread across a 45,000- sq ft area. The centre houses a world-class Neurovascular Innovation Lab that will be the first of its kind in India. Besides this, it is USGBC (U.S. Green Building Council) LEED Platinum certified and offers features for differently abled people. Stryker established its first R&D facility in India more than 15 years ago to provide engineering support to R&D functions in domestic and other emerging markets. Since then, the SGTC R&D team has been partnering across divisions to drive innovation and research to provide better healthcare solutions.

What kind of expertise are brought in with the SGTC launch?

The SGTC R&D centre was established in 2006 in Gurugram with a focus on accelerating innovation and product development in developed and emerging markets. Since then, the SGTC R&D team has been partnering with our different divisions to launch products that are making healthcare better for millions of people in India and across the globe. SGTC R&D has garnered a unique space among all R&D sites of Stryker with established product development teams for all Stryker divisions under one roof. The team is trained and equipped to identify the unique needs and challenges of surgeons and healthcare practitioners from various specialties to develop prototypes in a short span of time, get customer feedback and then take the project into the development stage.

What are the challenges facing the technology workforce in India for the life sciences sector in India? How can those be addressed?

There is no dearth of technological development to strengthen the life sciences sector. The pandemic has brought the revolution to the lacklustre attitude of the healthcare sector with the adoption of newer and better technologies. Initially, the sector was apprehensive of adopting these technologies but later started investing heavily in it to deliver state-of-the-art solutions to its stakeholders. It is interesting to note that according to NITI Aayog, the Indian telemedicine market size is set to increase from $830 million to $5.5 billion by 2025 growing at a CAGR of 31 per cent by 2025. There is also a rising demand for medical devices globally.

Technology remained the root cause of this fundamental change in the life sciences industry. It is helping the industry in developing personalised products and conducting testing in innovative ways. As a result, technology is making the sector more and more efficient and providing improved patient outcomes as well as employee experience. This pivot is also visible in the investment that the industry is receiving. In 2022, the investment hit an all-time high and is expected to go up daily. R&D and innovation has acquired a renewed importance for the sector.

Also, with the large number of engineering graduates India produces each year from top institutions, India has the potential to become a global hub for R&D for medical devices. Several companies have set up their R&D centres in India employing large numbers of engineers and associates. Recognising and incentivising this within the framework of Make in India is key. Also, there is a great opportunity for collaboration and partnerships with Indian institutions - a strong funding mechanism becomes imperative which can be achieved through capital subsidies and tax incentivisation.

How do you plan to enhance the medtech market growth in India with this new centre?

The medtech ecosystem is undergoing a transformation and rapid advances in technology are creating new opportunities for advancement in the healthcare industry. Meaningful innovation can come in many forms like a new feature to make a product more useful or a unique way to apply an evolving technology to a real-world problem. In such a scenario, investment in R&D is not only the prudent choice but a necessary one. Science and innovation give us the tools to develop products and services that improve the lives of caregivers and patients. In each of the past 5 years, we have invested about 6 to 7 per cent of annual revenue in research and development. In 2021 alone, Stryker spent $1.2 billion on research and development. By the end of that year, we owned more than 11,000 patents worldwide, a number we keep growing. Moreover, we value our employee’s potential, diverse background, identities, and experience supporting the teams in achieving the mission of Stryker, fuel innovation and solve complex issues. Our vision is to bring Stryker’s legacy of innovation to India and leverage world class talent and technology ecosystem.

What new launches are in the pipeline for the Indian market in 2022 & beyond?

Stryker is a global medtech company. We have an established global ecosystem of over 40+ manufacturing facilities spread across the world, and we leverage that ecosystem to make sure that we manufacture products that are competitive and world-class in their quality to address the needs of different parts of the world. As the centre is focused on designing and innovating for markets across the globe, we continue to leverage our global manufacturing capacities.

In terms of region-specific manufacturing, we have just begun the journey of designing, developing, and manufacturing them. We are driven by our mission of making healthcare better and are designing cutting-edge products in India for the world. Currently, we leverage India as a market for supplying great talent for Stryker and doing great research and development work. That is our key strategy.

To be launched in India soon, SmartMedic, is a product conceptualised and developed in India and only for markets like India. This is a platform that upgrades existing beds in a hospital. It is a connected device that measures a patient's weight and monitors turn-compliance to prevent bed sores and we will be launching it very soon during 2022. Apart from this, Endocart is the other product which was first made in India. It houses different endoscopic cameras, light sources, and all other devices.

Dr Manbeena Chawla

(Manbeena.chawla@mmactiv.com)