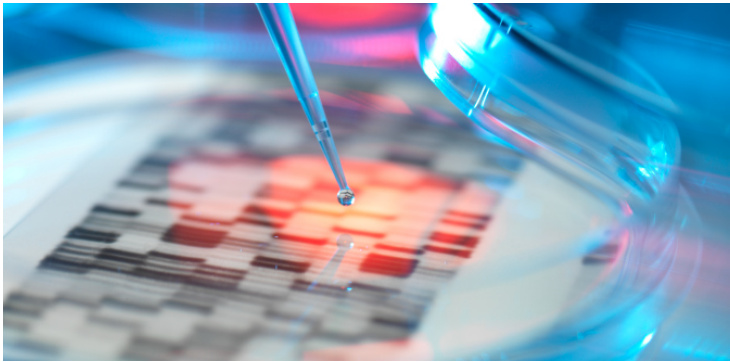


Challenges exist across every spectrum of healthcare: Vineet Datta

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Vineet Datta, Executive Director, Datar Cancer Genetics Ltd talks about his centre and its expansion plans in India



Can you throw some light on the journey of Datar Cancer Genetics Lab?

DCGL offers the most comprehensive services and solutions in molecular oncology, genomic analysis and fully integrated bioinformatics. It has focused largely on developing services that offer a greater insight into precision and customised medicine through its diverse ecosystem of innovative oncology solutions. It is a molecular genomic facility at Nashik, with a strong and competent team of over 200 comprising world-class scientists, researchers, specialist clinicians and data analysts who are devoted to developing the world's best technologies for cancer management. It has fully integrated sequencing, bioinformatics, human interface and interpretation platforms with access to international databases. The organisation offers its solutions across 12 countries and in over 100 cities across India, and through leading healthcare groups.

DCGL key Services includes the following:-

Exacta® - Encyclopedia Tumor Analysis

This multi-analyte investigation through the tumour DNA and RNA analysis reaches the depths of cancer's mechanisms through 100s of millions of data points. It reveals the driver mutations and pathways that are propelling a patient's cancer and can be targeted with precision drugs. This molecular data is analyzed in conjunction with the results of the Chemo-sensitivity results to provide the most comprehensive and clinically actionable therapy recommendation for the patients.

Cancertrack - Liquid Biopsy

It is a noninvasive blood-based analysis on specific molecular biomarkers derived from cancer cells, and the report aids prognostication and therapy selection. It helps address the issue of tumor heterogeneity and varied molecular profile of same cancer type.

Gliotracer - Liquid Biopsy for Brain Tumors

It is an in-depth, safe and comprehensive alternative for invasive brain biopsies and can be used for detection of malignancy. The analysis is carried out on the peripheral blood sample collected from the patient. The test reveals the molecular signature of cancers, molecular signs of drug resistance and the molecular alterations guiding specific therapy.

We also look largely at Precision medicine which is now globally accepted not just in oncology but in other fields of healthcare as well. And it largely looks at providing the right treatment to the right patient at the right time in the right way. It's very personalized and specific.

The development of cancer to large extent is a conglomeration of a number of things. It is either genetic in nature or acquired due to lifestyle issue. Also, every patient behaves differently even if it's a same cancer and same stage. In both of the cases, our genes have a major role to play in terms of how the cancer behaves. We focus on tailor making the therapies and look at specific target therapies for different patients.

What are your expansion plans in India?

Our technology and solutions today are extremely innovative with very few groups across the world, if any have the ability to bring together the kind of solutions that we provide. We certainly want to cater to Indian healthcare community. And due to various structures in terms of our partnerships domestically our foundation can connect and provides a lot of services to our patients within India. But the vision is also to be a successful organization which caters to other parts of the world. Currently, we are offering services across the US, Canada, across the United Kingdom in Europe

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Across GCC, we have a partnership with the Thyocare where we offer services to the oncology solutions across the GCC nations. The organization earlier this year expanded its presence into Europe. So we are setting up data and holding a call in our cancer genetics Europe which is based out of Germany, it's close to Nuremberg, and the aim there is to provide some of our solutions that are available today, both to clinicians and patients across Europe. The US aspirations also serve other parts of the world which we don't work in today. But that has to be met in a methodical and a structured manner for expansion.

The areas of interest for us are the late stage patients as these are the patients who have failed multiple lines of therapy. And we believe we now have solutions, we believe we have validated Indian data some of which we are publishing across Global Forum. And for us to be successful, not just in cancer, but in all spheres, we need to have Indian local data. That is one area that we are very good at.

What are the major challenges faced by healthcare sector today?

The challenges exist across whichever spectrum you pick up. I think healthcare has its own unique set of challenges. One of the biggest challenge we have is the behavioral mindset as a country that we exist in which is really more reactant to reactive medicine rather than proactive medicine. As a nation, what we are largely dealing with is, when we get diagnosed, we run around for treatment. There are enough screening programs for various types of cancers. There are plenty of laws and initiatives that can be taken across various spectrums. But the main problem is behavior changes, which takes time. I think from the challenge standpoint, what is important for organizations like us is to ensure that whatever technologies we provide must be accurate and reliable. It must be credible to the highest global standards which is why we have done things as an initiative and looked at benchmark ourselves across all the global peers, who work in our space and look at all the accreditations in that space.

Another challenge is the lack of close communication between the clinician and the patient to ensure that their queries are met is very important, now that people Google their symptoms and treatments rather than going to a doctor. This is important for better data transfer.