

"India has the fastest growing online healthcare market"

20 February 2013 | Interviews | By Rahul Koul Koul

India has the fastest growing online healthcare market



Indegene offers scientific partnership to global life science companies by delivering a spectrum of medical, marketing, training, intelligence, and analytics services. Mr Manish Gupta, CEO, Indegene has more than 15 years of experience. He has pioneered the application of robust and scalable operational processes to the domain of pharmaceutical commercialization and scientific services. At Indegene, he is responsible for general operations, investor relations, and driving the overall strategy of the company.

Excerpts of the interview.

With respect to Indian context, how potent do you think is social media in pharma companies? How can social media analytics help in understanding the market dynamics for the Indian industry?

A recent COMSCORE report places India as the fastest growing online market amongst Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) nations, and has a 10 percent penetration rate. The health sector has experienced 43 percent YOY growth over the last 12 months, positioning both users and the healthcare industry as prominent users of internet-based information and networking. Since patients are already widely using the internet to search for information, pharma companies have realized the need to understand sentiments and be present where their customers are already active.

Social media in pharma is very different from how one may use popular social networking sites, as there is significant risk and compliance that must be ensured to effectively engage stakeholders. We, at Indegene have a tremendous applied understanding of how this needs to be done from experience, conceptualizing to building and implementing client programs across market places, including India.

Can you name a few examples where social media has been used effectively by Indian companies?

Since the evolution of social media in the Indian market, there have been several successful campaigns. For example - Cipla's "Breathe Free Diwali Campaign" was a public initiative by Cipla in order to create the awareness of harmful effects of diwali cracker smoke to asthmatics. Other early movers in the Asia Pacific Region (APAC) markets have been AstraZeneca, Merck, and Sanofi.

Lastly, what is your outlook for India as compared to other countries in the APAC region in the next few years? Do you see the pharma and biotech scene progressing or stagnating?

The Indian healthcare sector is worth \$158 billion and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 15 percent over the next few years. It is estimated that the marketplace will be worth \$280 billion by 2020, which will contribute eight percent of GDP. The Indian pharmaceutical market has emerged as the 10th fastest growing pharma market. With all stakeholders including providers, payers, pharmaceuticals, and patients changing, the Indian market place is becoming very unique.

Patients continue to contribute about 85 percent of healthcare expenditure out-of-pocket. Currently, branded generics, for example, occupy 70-80 percent of market and local players enjoy dominant position, creating intense competition amongst local firms and their multinational counterparts. There is still a very large gap that exists between demand and supply, and this has made the Indian market place an important area for pharma, providers and payers.