Nicolas Dumoulin – General Manager & Head of Human Pharma, Boehringer Ingelheim Denmark



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Boehringer Ingelheim's Nicolas Dumoulin outlines Denmark's relevance to the German family-owned company, including the strong uptake of its diabetes and COPD medications in the country and its host of research collaborations with local partners.

Can you begin by introducing your career background up to this point?

Boehringer Ingelheim is my third employer in the pharmaceutical industry. I was initially attracted to the business due to it being a family-owned top 20 pharma company. The company made it possible for me to develop a wide set of skills with experience spanning from animal health to human pharmaceuticals, and from the commercial side to human resource management. Furthermore, I have worked across multiple countries beginning in France and then to Germany, Austria, and now Denmark.

During this cross-functional experience and movement between countries I have seen the values of Boehringer Ingelheim translated into daily working life. This incorporates integrity, a reliance on facts and science, sustainability, and diversity into a clear goal of innovating and improving health for both animals and humans.

What is the relevance of Denmark to Boehringer Ingelheim?

Denmark is attractive to Boehringer Ingelheim as it has built a world-class healthcare system with local innovation and patient data as the key pillars of its relevance. The Danish market can quickly take in innovation and adopt evidence-based practices. Furthermore, Denmark has been a leader in the market of diabetes for years.

How does Boehringer Ingelheim differentiate itself within the highly competitive diabetes space?

We take pride in having, with the results of one of our clinical trials, initiated a shift from a purely glucose centric approach in the treatment of diabetes to a more holistic approach including different organs but specifically the cardiovascular area for treatment. There are now two classes of medicine with such a benefit and the discussion has turned to the financial sustainability of the therapeutic area. We are confident that our treatment is in the class that provides the best value for money. Today, roughly 35,000 patients with type2 diabetes in Denmark benefit from our medicine.

In which other therapeutic areas does Boehringer Ingelheim have a leadership position or aspire to have a leadership position that is going to generate impact?

Many COPD patients in Denmark rely on our company’s respiratory treatments every day. Boehringer Ingelheim also provides innovative solutions in the respiratory field to stop or limit progression of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. Similarly, the business aims to meet an area of high unmet need in progressive interstitial lung disease and establish a leadership position in that market.

In addition, one of Boehringer Ingelheim’s medicine recently achieved breakthrough results as its efficacy was demonstrated in the first and only successful trial for heart failure patients with preserved ejection fractions. It is one of our new breakthrough innovations.

What is your experience of the Danish market access process?

While COVID-19 created delays and issues, historically the process works effectively and efficiently for Boehringer Ingelheim and is assisted by the right data and a high level of digitalization throughout Danish society.

From your experience throughout the pandemic, is there going to be any learnings from this period that you are going to take on moving forward?

At this stage of the pandemic, our stakeholders and contacts across the country are craving real interaction. As a result, Boehringer Ingelheim will incorporate as much of a mix between digital and face-to-face interaction as possible depending on the situation.

Denmark recently launched a new National Life Sciences Strategy; what is your take on its potential impact?

The National Life Science Strategy is a positive progression from what is already a vibrant life-science ecosystem. Denmark was already a favorable ecosystem for life science innovation to grow and keeps developing. The new strategy highlights social inequality and chronic diseases, where there are many unmet needs As Boehringer Ingelheim centres on COPD, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, it will be important to provide the best standard of treatment for everybody in Danish society. However, the pandemic has created a backlog of chronic disease patients within the healthcare system.

The Life Science Strategy reinforces the attractiveness of Denmark for innovative partnerships. Boehringer Ingelheim collaborates with scientific partners all over the world, and obviously in Denmark. For example, Boehringer Ingelheim is working in a partnership with Gubra, a biotech company based in Hørsholm on a peptide compound in Phase I for obesity. Another example is a compound developed in partnership with Søborg-based Zealand Pharma. It recently received a fast-tracked designation from the FDA in the treatment of NASH. Additionally, Boehringer Ingelheim’s open science initiative ‘OpnMe’ also contributes to life science development, for instance through the ODIN network with the University of Aarhus. There is a wealth of knowledge in Denmark, especially in the cardiometabolic area, and a strong culture of collaboration, to which we contribute and benefit from.

From your perspective in Denmark, how much is the company's global pivot from a 'pharma company' into a 'healthcare company' part of your strategy?

As an agricultural powerhouse within Europe, especially in animal farming, Denmark is an interesting animal health market which is also pivotal to Boehringer Ingelheim. We are dedicated to animal and human health and consider the fields to be interconnected. Strategically, we innovate and provide solutions in both areas for healthcare in the broadest sense of the word.

How would you categorize the way Boehringer interacts with the holistic patient data records Denmark has to offer?

Most of the current 19 clinical trials, which our company is conducting or planning in Denmark, involve diseases which affect a small number of patients. Therefore, the ability to identify the correct patient quickly makes this country attractive for clinical trials, especially regarding rare diseases.

It is important to continually assess the effectiveness of products in real life and provide this information to stakeholders and healthcare professionals. That is what we do by generating data in Denmark for Danish stakeholders. Actually, this data is recognized beyond the country's borders and allows for extensive collaboration with experts.

As we emerge from this pandemic, what do you hope to achieve with Boehringer in Denmark?

My overarching goal is to bring BI's breakthrough innovations in interstitial lung disease and heart failure to the market. On a personal level, I am looking forward to getting back to working face-to-face!

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