

World-standard insulin to be made in Bangladesh

Novo Nordisk and Eskayef Bangladesh pair up



SHAWKAT JAMIL

Lise Kingo, executive vice president and chief of staff of Novo Nordisk, speaks to The Daily Star at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday. Prof AK Azad Khan, left, Bangladesh Diabetic Association president; Jesper Hoiland, second from right, senior vice president of Novo Nordisk, and Sanjeev Shishoo, extreme right, vice president for Oceania and South East Asia, are also seen.

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SOHEL PARVEZ

It was two hours before midnight. An aged woman, arms clasped and covered by a *chador* against cold, slowly entered a thinly crowded drug store. She gripped a vial as she approached the salesperson.

The store assistant appeared to be familiar with the woman, who handed a vial and syringe, and asked him to push inject her right arm. It is filled with insulin, named Mixtard 30, made by Novo Nordisk.

To date, this insulin brand, Mixtard, comes from Denmark, the base of Novo Nordisk, the global leader in diabetes care. But within a year, no import of such insulin from the Scandinavian country will be required.

The drug will be made at Tongi near Dhaka thanks to a tie-up between the world's biggest insulin maker Novo Nordisk and Eskayef Bangla-

desh Ltd, a leading local pharmaceutical company.

The partnership deal, signed in 2009, has facilitated establishment of a hi-tech plant to make these sophisticated biotechnological products here.

The Nordisk-Eskayef plant opens today to manufacture over 5 million vials a year, maintaining the high quality standards followed by Novo Nordisk across the world.

"We've one global standard. So everywhere you will have insulin of exactly the same standard," said Lise Kingo, executive vice president and chief of staff of Novo Nordisk.

Kingo shared his view in an interview with The Daily Star at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

Senior Vice President of International Operations Jesper Hoiland, Vice President for Oceania and South East Asia Sanjeev Shishoo and Bangladesh Diabetic Association Pres-

ident Prof AK Azad Khan were also present.

Novo Nordisk officials are in Dhaka to attend the inauguration of the insulin making plant.

They expressed confidence that Eskayef backed by a leading business conglomerate, Transcom Group, would be able to make quality insulin here as per the global standard.

"We're very pleased that we've partnered with Eskayef. Transcom is behind it. It's (Trancom) a very professionally run company that is working in many different areas and we feel very comfortable that we've found the right partner for this collaboration," Jesper Hoiland said.

"And we've so far done very fine and lived up to our expectation," he added.

The groundwork for the tie-up began four years ago. Novo Nordisk and Eskayef inked the deal in November of 2009, after global diabetic care giant

became confident that the Bangladeshi company would be able to make quality insulin by following the single global standard of Novo Nordisk.

The plant, one of the three in Asia after China and India, is going to be opened at a time when nearly 6 million Bangladeshis suffer from diabetes. The number is expected to cross 10 million in the next 20 years due to changes in lifestyle, rapid urbanisation, lack of work and obesity and ageing of people.

At present, some 20 percent of the diabetic patients get care through the network of the diabetic association, with which Novo Nordisk also partners in educating health care professionals and creating public awareness about the disease.

Such partnership has not only helped create awareness and educate healthcare professionals but also allowed Novo Nordisk to record high demand for its products.

The company enjoys more than 80 percent share in the insulin segment of diabetic care market in Bangladesh.

Kingo said the plant in Bangladesh will increase the availability of its products on the local market.

Besides, the plant will also help leverage the expertise of local population, transfer technology and benefit society.

Shishoo said the establishment of the manufacturing base in partnership with Eskayef shows Novo Nordisk's confidence in Bangladesh.

"It's a tremendous sign of confidence. We're very selective about the countries where we start production," he said.

"It's not a normal 24-hour routine, but it's also a confidence in our partners like Eskayef that we can set up a world-class plant which can deliver the insulin of the highest quality."

Jesper Hoiland said the fac-

tory in Dhaka would also have an impact on the work force.

"It will have impact on society," he said, pointing out that Bangladesh is one of the countries that handle well the issues of diabetes caring.

"I'm always using Bangladesh as a role model because you've really done a world class job of looking after patients with diabetes," said Hoiland, pointing to the network and care solutions provided by Bangladesh Diabetic Association.

Kingo said he admired Bangladesh's effort for diabetes care and said Novo Nordisk has been working for many years educating doctors and nurses how to treat people with diabetes.

The 87-year-old Novo Nordisk, which has been operating in Bangladesh since 1972, also supports BADAS to provide care to underprivileged children with diabetes.

sohel@thedailystar.net

COLUMN

Training that transforms

SARWAR AHMED

As we drove back from the village meeting, Habibul Islam, our regional sales manager, confided: "A couple of months ago, we thought Bithi would not be able to do this job and had given up on her. After attending the performance management workshop, we now know how to develop our colleagues. And it is making a world of difference!"

The proof was in the meeting. Morsheda Khanam Bithi successfully conducted a meeting with farmers where she explained how to ensure successful rice harvests.

After the meeting, she was given feedback by Aminul Islam, her immediate superior, on what she had done right and set objectives for the new skills to be demonstrated in future. She was all smiles when I asked about her work. Bithi explained that

she really enjoyed her job as her skills had improved tremendously.

More often than not, we assume that a couple of days of training will work miracles in developing our people. There is a famous 70-20-10 rule in training. Attending a regular classroom training session will only impart 10 percent of learning. A couple of practice sessions may lead to 20 percent of retention. It is only through continuous and seventy percent on the job coaching that you will see the rise in the development curve of knowledge and skills of your associates. And this is the crunch in people development -- you must invest time in your people and coach them continuously and personally to a new level of skills.

Having being in the training trail since my career began nearly 30 years ago, I found training and development to be the a major competi-

tive edge that has kept us ahead of competition.

Over the years, I learned training to be of three types. One is motivational, feel well training programmes. Once you have been through such programmes, you come out rejuvenated, maybe for a week until the aura rubs off.

The trainer's charisma and bag of tricks makes you feel you can conquer the world. However, you are soon down to reality, doing your daily grind.

The second type is where we are imparted knowledge with a sprinkle of skills, hoping we will be able to use those as soon as we are sitting in our swivel chairs, back in the office.

The third type of training is where you get value for money and is hard to come by. This is where a well thought-out programme is designed not only to impart knowledge and

skills but has an on-ground follow up programme to ensure that the skills are internalised and used. Such training programmes are aligned to the company's objectives and are tailored and designed specifically to achieve these objectives.

As an example, our sales colleagues have gone through a performance-management workshop, which is designed specifically to coach and improve the communication skills of our market promoters.

We first defined what the job components of our promoters are and then looked at what knowledge and skills are required to perform the job. We then determined the level of knowledge and skills of the promoters and designed training programmes for them as well as their superiors. Our promoters meet twice a year for these training programmes. Their superiors, who

have been trained to coach on skills development, spend an enormous amount of time now to coach the promoters and officers. This is the 70 percent rule, which translates training into skills.

What is the result? Higher morale, more confidence, productivity and lesser turnover. Not only do the promoters feel energised with the application of new skills in their jobs, the general working environment has also improved a lot.

Superiors are seen now not as a command and control boss but a colleague helping them to improve their skills and be successful in their jobs.

On-the-job coaching entails that you separate the skills required to perform a job from the individual as a person. More often than not, I have seen bosses screaming at their colleagues, deriding them for not doing

their job right. These shouting matches are based on attacking the self-respect of the person, "You are an idiot! You don't even know how to do this."

If someone is failing to do his job, you need to ask first, does the person have the requisite skills?

If not, arrange a training programme to impart the knowledge and practice the skills to ensure that the person can do the job. Once the skills have been learnt, and the person still fails to perform, then of course, you can fume and swear and have an 'or else' discussion.

I can assure you, the more you invest in your people through personal coaching, the less fuming you will resort to, and you will have motivated colleagues who will make sure your organisation succeeds.

The writer is the managing director of Syngenta Bangladesh Ltd.