BioSpectrum the business of Bio & Health Sciences ASIA EDITION

# JAPAC attractive market dynamics to drive emerging biopharma (EBPs) clinical programs

17 August 2021 | Opinion | By Hithaishi C Bhaksar

**In conversation with Dr Senthil Sockalingam, Head of IQVIA Biotech (Asia Pacific)**

IQVIA has announced the Japan and Asia Pacific (JAPAC) expansion of IQVIA Biotech, a tailored approach to delivering integrated clinical solutions at an accelerated pace. As stated in a recent white paper by IQVIA Biotech, the total pipeline of emerging biopharma (EBP) companies in JAPAC is equivalent to roughly two-thirds of the entire global biopharma industry pipeline. In JAPAC alone, just under 7000 studies were launched by mid- and small-size EBPs between 2016-2020. Indeed, the expansion is complemented with IQVIA Biotech's advanced analytics and technology solutions for clinical research programs which assist in clinical progress of biologics, drugs, and vaccines. Speaking with Biospectrum Asia, the ***Head of IQVIA Biotech (Asia Pacific), Dr Senthil Sockalingam*** shares the aspirations and goals of new JAPAC expansion dedicated to biotech and emerging biopharma industries.

- **How significant is the recent expansion to JAPAC and what are the key performance goals?**

JAPAC (Asia-Pacific and Japan) is an increasingly important location for clinical trials. The region accounts for close to 60% of the world's population and presents high disease burdens, fast-improving infrastructure, clinical trial recruitment, and regulatory efficiencies, globally leading data management innovation, and, increasingly, greater government support of clinical research.

Clinical trial sites set up by biotech and biopharma companies in JAPAC have increased by over 40 per cent each year on average, compared to just 11% across the rest of the world. There are a lot of biotech companies coming to JAPAC to run their clinical programs and wanting to launch their drugs in the region given the attractive market dynamics. Given the rise of the region and the globalisation of drug development, especially around emerging biopharma (EBPs), it was a good time to launch IQVIA Biotech in JAPAC.

The clinical development needs of emerging biotech and biopharma companies across Japan and Asia-Pacific, are different from those that make up the more established pharmaceutical industry. We know that emerging biotech and biopharma companies need high flexibility, rapid turnaround timelines for faster and smarter decisions, competitive pricing, predictable

cash flows and a research organisation that provides a transparent partnership in clinical development. Therefore, the IQVIA Biotech offering is a custom-built delivery model that mirrors biotech organisations to offer simplified operating procedures, reduced complexity and specialised teams with deep local expertise to provide a more agile way for emerging biotech and biopharma companies to reach their clinical and commercial milestones. With our regional headquarters for IQVIA Biotech in Singapore and offices in 15 countries, we have specialised teams collaborating across 16,000+ sites, to provide custom-built, fit-for-purpose clinical and commercial solutions specifically tailored to fit the unique needs of dynamic and fast-moving emerging biotech and biopharma companies in JAPAC. By harnessing the power of unparalleled data, innovative technology, advanced analytics, and domain expertise to create intelligent connections, IQVIA Biotech solutions can accelerate clinical and commercial success for local and multinational emerging biopharma clients operating in JAPAC, and ultimately also improving patient health outcomes.

- **Can you share insights on the current potential therapeutic portfolio and clinical assets at JAPAC clinical development operations? How do you foresee market access and commercialization prospects in the region?**

Our focus in JAPAC is to provide tailored clinical development expertise and highly customised solutions for the distinct needs of emerging biotech and biopharma client partners.

JAPAC is a diverse region that has different stages of maturity and business objectives. Oncology is a big trend amongst biotech companies in the region. There's an increased trend in neurology, particularly around psoriasis and osteoarthritis treatment, and immunology.

Having a team with expertise in specific therapeutic areas is crucial to the success of clinical development programmes. Our therapeutic focus areas for IQVIA Biotech are:

- Oncology
- Cardiovascular
- Central nervous system conditions
- Dermatology
- Rare diseases

In addition to our clinical solution, our offerings also include asset valuation and due diligence, drug development strategy and analytics, launch strategy and planning to help develop a market-backed, evidence-driven commercial plan. Our local and global experts provide actionable insights and resources?to?help?accelerate commercial?success by offering Contract Sales and Medical Solutions to provide new capabilities by building and deploying contract sales and/or medical teams, and free up resources for more innovation.

- **Can you elaborate on IQVIA's integrated clinical and commercial strategies to accelerate the drug innovation spectrum?**

We partner with emerging biotech and biopharma companies to help them streamline operations and gain valuable visibility into market forces. A long-term strategy from the outset that helps to avoid costly amendments down the road is critical. IQVIA Biotech in JAPAC partners with emerging biotech and biopharma companies to develop comprehensive plans at an early stage to provide a roadmap for key activities – including cost and timeline factors – with investors and other key stakeholders in mind. Our local and global experts provide actionable insights and resources to help accelerate drug development, commercial success, maximize value through an evolving commercial model and get the product into the hands of the patients who need it.

- **How do you describe IQVIA Biotech's partnering solutions tailored for emerging biopharma (EBP) companies in the JAPAC biopharma industry?**

Emerging biopharma (EBP) companies are proving to be a disruptive force, representing a significant portion of innovation and development in life sciences with 84 per cent of early-stage and 73 per cent of late-stage research globally. We know their needs are different and they require high flexibility and custom-built clinical and commercial solutions.

IQVIA Biotech's offerings are dedicated to removing the complexities in the way of emerging biotech and biopharma companies and specifically designed to meet their regional and global aspirations. Transparent partnerships, a superior level of quality, and a deep commitment to each study, will ultimately enable emerging biotech and biopharma companies to deliver innovative solutions to those who need them most.

Partnering will be critical going forward and in JAPAC, IQVIA pays special attention to ensuring that our partnering and

delivery teams have the cultural/language capabilities appropriate to their EBP partners and the countries/regions involved in each respective development-launch program. The expectations to deliver on unmet medical needs – as well as continuing to innovate in new business models – are paramount. With a wide variety of outsourcing models now well established in the industry, EBP organisations can explore a host of arrangements with varying levels of engagement and integration. Fully partnered options can improve integration of partners' processes and technology, help ensure resource and development forecasting and planning through earlier engagement, enhance real-time escalation of issues and more swift resolutions and provide clearer accountability for outcomes leading to significantly improved predictability and downstream productivity.

- **How have the strategic partnerships and investor relations in IQVIA Biotech been affected by COVID-19?**

The ongoing pandemic has forced us to virtualise and do things differently. In JAPAC, the virtualisation has increased so rapidly that the regulatory framework is still catching up. Sales and scientific engagement with healthcare providers have virtualised, allowing broader outreach and faster feedback, adaptation of education, and quicker understanding of the commercial value of a product. This helps companies make more data driven decisions, and gain more exposure to innovative therapeutics, which are driven out of biotech. We are constantly monitoring these developments and adjusting our execution plans to provide bespoke solutions and meet the distinct requirements of customers in light of these challenges.

**Hithaishi C Bhaskar**

**hithaishi.cb@mmactiv.com**