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GSK appoints new team in China

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Singapore: Leading British drug maker GlaxoSmithKline announced that it has appointed two new executives in China to oversee the sales and marketing operations in the country.

The drug maker experienced a lot of trouble in China after the bribery and corruption scandal broke out in the Asian country last year. Since then GSK has been undergoing a lot of reputational damage and the company has said that the new team will help prevent any repeat of bribery scandals that tainted pharmaceutical company's image.

GSK appointed Mr Herve Gisserot as the new general manager for China last summer and has now brought in German national Mr Thomas Willemsen to look after sales while US-educated Mr Wang Yizhe will take charge of marketing.

GSK make this announcement even as the Chinese regulators continued to investigate the case in which GSK representatives allegedly paid out up to $489 million in bribes to boost sales of their drugs. Further, a GSK-appointed law firm is also conducting an inquiry following allegations from last year.

"As we have made consistently clear, we are committed to China and to serving the needs of patients. The new management team in the country are shaping our business to best meet that purpose," a GSK spokesman told the press.

GSK has said it will overhaul its global sales model and stop paying medical professionals to promote its products. The firm will also employ hundreds more doctors in-house in a drive to eliminate 'sharp' marketing practices.

Bribery between sales staff and doctors is rife in China, with steep sales targets and low salaries for doctors creating fertile ground for backhanders.