BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

Ã¢â?¬Å?We believe Korea outpaces many Western markets in its appetite and readiness to adopt integrated digital-biological innovationÃ¢â?¬Â•

March 1, 2026 | Opinion | By Ayesha Siddiqui

Quanterix Corporation, a US-based biotechnology company focused on ultrasensitive biomarker detection, has entered an exclusive distribution agreement in Korea with Seoul-based digital healthcare company Emocog Inc., led by Co-CEOs Jun-Young Lee and Yoo-Hun Noh. The agreement, which includes Quanterix's clinical diagnostics brand Lucent Diagnostics, covers the Simoa Single Molecule Array platform, including the HD-X immunoassay analyser and blood-based Alzheimer's biomarker reagents. The deal marks the first launch of Simoa in Korea as a formally authorised In Vitro Diagnostic device rather than a Research Use Only instrument. David Wilson, Vice President of Clinical Strategy at Quanterix, discusses the strategic rationale behind entering the Korean market, the role of local partnerships in APAC expansion, competitive dynamics across regions, and how ultra-sensitive biomarker detection could shape precision medicine in Asia-Pacific over the next five years.



What strategic gaps in the Korean diagnostics market does this exclusive distribution agreement with Lucent Diagnostics and Emocog aim to address?

A key unmet need in the Korean market is the lack of an efficient, non-invasive triage pathway. Currently, there is a significant bottleneck between early digital screening and costly PET imaging. This agreement bridges that gap by establishing a synergistic diagnostic funnel where Emocog's digital screening solution first identifies individuals with cognitive or functional impairment, effectively enriching the pool for amyloid positivity. Quanterix's blood test, a multi-analyte algorithmic test based on p-Tau 217, is then applied only to this 'enriched' population, substantially improving the Positive Predictive Value of the results. This approach mitigates concerns about the reduced diagnostic accuracy of blood-based tests in low-prevalence populations and ensures that high-cost clinical imaging is reserved for patients with a strong biological probability of Alzheimer's pathology.

Korea has a highly advanced diagnostics ecosystem. What factors made it a priority market for Quanterix within your broader APAC expansion strategy?

Beyond having one of the world's fastest-aging demographics – with over 20 per cent of the population aged 65 and older – Korea benefits from a uniquely centralised healthcare infrastructure. The government's 'National Responsibility Plan for Dementia' supported by a nationwide network of over 250 National Dementia Centers, provides a ready-made framework for standardised testing. Additionally, Korea's high digital literacy makes it an ideal 'lighthouse market' to prove how ultra-sensitive blood-based biomarkers can be seamlessly integrated with digital screening platforms and clinical workflows at a national scale. Together, these factors create a uniquely supportive environment for demonstrating real-world, scalable innovation in early Alzheimer's detection and management.

How important are local partnerships in driving technology adoption in APAC?

Across the APAC region, local partnerships mean the difference between research use and clinical adoption. In Korea, organisations like Lucent Diagnostics and Emocog provide the essential 'last mile' delivery—navigating the unique MFDS regulatory pathways and nuanced relationships within Seoul's major hospital systems. Their trusted presence and operational expertise enable the localisation of Quanterix's global technology into the local clinical context, transforming it from an advanced research tool into a recognised standard of care. By doing so, these partnerships significantly accelerate access to accurate, non-invasive testing for the millions of Koreans currently living with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and at risk of Alzheimer's disease.

How does the diagnostics landscape in Korea differ from North America or Europe in terms of competition, innovation pace, and customer expectations?

We believe Korea outpaces many Western markets in its appetite and readiness to adopt integrated digital-biological innovation. While the US and Europe often treat digital screening tools and blood-based diagnostics as separate siloes, the Korean ecosystem is moving toward a 'total platform' model that unifies data, diagnostics and clinical decision support into a continuous workflow. This open mindset to integration extends to Korea's regulatory framework for AI-driven medical technologies, also known as Software as a Medical Device (SaMD) and provides a clear pathway for validation, approval and real-world iteration. These factors make it possible to deploy, refine and scale the Emocog–Quanterix diagnostic workflow more rapidly than in larger, more fragmented Western markets.

What operational or infrastructure challenges does Quanterix anticipate when scaling its presence across APAC, and how does the Korea agreement help address those challenges?

Scaling across APAC requires navigating complex and fragmented regulatory and reimbursement landscapes. Our strategy is to leverage the Korea agreement as a "blueprint for excellence" – demonstrating how digital screening and blood-based biomarker testing can be operationally integrated within a national healthcare framework. By refining the operational integration of blood biomarkers and digital health in Korea first, we can establish a replicable platform that can be adapted for other technology-forward markets such as Singapore and Japan. A key challenge in regional scale-up lies in maintaining sample integrity and pre-analytical consistency across diverse healthcare environments. Local partners like Emocog ensure that every step, from sample collection to data transfer, upholds the requirements of ultra-sensitive Simoa detection.

Looking ahead, how do you see ultra-sensitive biomarker detection shaping disease monitoring and precision medicine in APAC over the next five years? Are there other markets in the region that Quanterix is actively evaluating for expansion?

The next five years will be defined by the global launch of disease-modifying therapies (DMTs). In APAC, ultra-sensitive biomarkers will shift from research tools to the primary gatekeepers for treatment eligibility. At Quanterix, we envision a future where blood-based testing is as routine as a cholesterol check, with digital-to-biological triage models—like the one we are building in Korea—becoming the global gold standard for early detection and therapeutic monitoring.

Ayesha Siddiqui