

Good Communication, Leadership, Strategic thinking-Key to Success#Women's Day2020

08 March 2020 | Opinion

In conversation with Dr Yooni Kim, Executive Director, Asia Operations, Novotech, Seoul, South Korea to applaud her inspiring journey through Healthcare industries in Asia



International Women's Day 2020 embracing the world with its new campaign **#EachForEqual**, aiming to draw attention to the difference each woman can bring out. Gender equality is essential for economies and communities to thrive. The campaign is expected to bring about change by raising awareness of bias and calling out inequality and to cheer women's achievement. Asian Women have always pioneered in the healthcare sector with venturesome women heading the most influential

positions in the different domains of health and medicine. Biospectrum Asia has always been mesmerized by our courageous women leaders in the healthcare industry and is celebrating this women's day with one such spectacular achiever **Dr Yooni Kim, Executive Director, Asia Operations, Novotech, Seoul, South Korea**

Dr Kim is responsible for overseeing Novotech's operations and project delivery within the Asia region. Prior to joining Novotech, Dr Kim worked at PRA Health Sciences as Director of Operations for North Asia. Dr Kim is very experienced in having managed operations for South Korea, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, India, and Japan. She has also worked at various positions in clinical development, medical affairs, and pharmacovigilance at GSK. She's a firm believer that good communications and leadership development are key for her team's success with biotech clients, which has lead to strong business growth for Novotech in the Asia region

On this special occasion of Women's Day, **Dr. Yooni Kim** gracefully shared her views and journey with Biopsectrum Asia to inspire millions of women in healthcare

What is your opinion on the lower percentage of women leaders in the Life sciences industry?

In the CRO industry, women tend to dominate entry-level positions, but numbers decline at more senior and executive levels. Family obligations are a practical hurdle for women and often take priority over a professional career – indeed culturally in Asia women take on more family responsibilities than men. In addition, often it's not easy to successfully transition back to work.

However, I think it's improving. More healthcare companies are focusing on how they can support women and keeping them with the company. Flexible work arrangements are one solution that helps women employees manage their lives.

The use of advanced mobile technology also supports this approach.

Novotech encourages our people to engage in flexible working practices across all Novotech's Asia locations. Both men and women benefit from this, and Novotech's supportive parental leave program.

Novotech prides itself on being a leader in workplace flexibility and gender equality, and we have a detailed strategy outlining our ambitions and transparent reporting to employees on our progress. A key initiative is workplace flexibility and employment equality Steering Group chaired by the CEO, with senior executive participants and broad employee representation.

With this kind of support from companies, I expect a higher percentage of women leaders will be in the life science industry in the near future.

Are the industries designating women to certain presumed gender-based positions in the companies?

As of today, a majority of Novotech's executive committee members are female (8 out of 15) and a majority of Novotech local leaders in Asia are female (5 out of the 7 locations we operate in across Asia). Gender equality initiatives are of upmost importance for us.

I particularly support the fact that my company has a Pay Equity for men and women at all levels in the organization. It also has mechanisms to ensure removal of biases in hiring, training opportunities, bonuses and promotion decision-making. Indeed, Novotech has just been granted the WGEA (Workplace Gender Equality Agency) Employer of Choice for Gender Equality.

Share your experience as an achiever in the Life Science industry and how you excelled to reach your goals.

Even just a decade ago, Asia was starting to emerge as an international drug development destination. I focused on what was needed to support this global shift and what kind of skillsets I needed to develop to take on leadership opportunities.

I liked the approach 'think globally, but work locally/and regionally'.

So pushed myself to take on roles with a global focus, but also to build the best local/regional expertise in this area.

The clinical research industry has been changing so fast and there are now more opportunities for women in the Asia region than at any other time.

What would be your suggestion to encourage women towards leadership roles and how a prolonged change can be achieved?

I do recommend a focus on strategic thinking. Women and men need to balance strategic thinking with the urgency of day to day demands.

I believe this kind of thinking can move junior women employees to leadership roles more quickly and deliver exceptional results. A belief in yourself and self-confidence is key for career progression and leadership.

In the CRO sector where it is all about people, it's important to lead teams and clients based on trusted relationships.