

China and India... to play a vital role in supplying COVID-19 vaccines globally

April 7, 2021 | Influencers

At the 2020 World Vaccine Congress Europe held in October 2020, Avantor, a leading global provider of critical products and services to customers in the life sciences, advanced technologies and applied materials industries, highlighted the key challenges facing vaccine developers as they progressively turn to single-use technology to increase productivity and also on the importance of managing risk and minimizing complexity in the global single-use supply chain as manufacturers scale operations to fight COVID-19. In an interview with Ankit Kankar from BioSpectrum, Narayana Rao, vice president, biopharma, Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa, Avantor shared his views on the current challenges before the global vaccine industry and how Avantor is gearing up for the post COVID era?



1. What are the other contributions Avantor is making to fight this pandemic, particularly in APAC?

Our products and services play a critical role in research and development, process development and commercial-scale production. A wide range of our products, including serum, process chemicals and single-use systems, are used

throughout the workflows of these therapies to get them to market safely and quickly.

Our technical and commercial teams are engaged with customers to understand their processes and support them with required products and technologies. In addition, Avantor's operations and supply chain teams are relentlessly working to ramp up capacity to meet demand. We are also collaborating with various organizations to help manage the packaging and cold chain of these therapies.

From a capability development standpoint, all major vaccine manufacturers, clinical data scientists and research and development scientists are looking for biopharma experts with the proficiency and competence to support them in terms of consistent supply of raw material and single-use solutions to connect various steps in their vaccine production process, from upstream to downstream purification to fill and finish.

From testing patients to vaccine development and manufacturing to therapy supply chains, we support companies in various phases of tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. Our customers trust us to provide our specified solutions in their processes and products so they can develop existing and novel therapies faster — setting science in motion to create a better world.

2. What are the major plans in store for 2021? How much growth is expected in the FY21-22?

The Asia Pacific Biopharmaceutical market was estimated to be worth \$36.57 billion (USD) in 2020. The market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.05% to reach approximately \$59.03 billion (USD) in 2025. Growth will be fueled by factors such as geriatric population, pandemics and chronic diseases, as well as technological advancement in research and development of novel therapies.

The region's life sciences industry is expanding rapidly. To support the needs of our customers here, we'll focus on expanding the Avantor Innovation and Customer Support Centers in China and South Korea to help optimize biopharmaceutical downstream processes, process efficiencies and product purity and recovery.

Overall, our growth rate over the past couple of years has been significantly above the market rate. I expect the trend to continue over next few years. In 2021 and 2022, we will continue to explore new geographies, commercial intensification and supply chain rigor.

3. How do you foresee the growth of the vaccine industry in the APAC region? Which country is likely to lead the way?

Global demand for COVID-19 vaccines is expected to be around 10-14 billion doses in 2021, depending on the aspired coverage rate and need for revaccination and boosters, though that estimate could change if new variants are more transmissible. There is currently large geographic variability in announced deals and demand. Manufacturers have announced a supply target of up to 14 billion doses — this would triple previous annual vaccine outputs.

Looking at the distribution of supply capacity across the world, concentration of capacity is observed in Asia, America and Europe. In terms of capacity ramp-up, Asia is fastest, producing an estimated 195 million doses as of March 2021. China and India will have the existing capacity through 2021 to most likely play a vital role in supplying COVID-19 vaccines globally.

With Avantor's dedicated technical and commercial teams and our expertise in providing biomanufacturing solutions, we are well poised to take advantage of this growth potential in the coming years.

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