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Asia Pacificâ??s Growing Healthcare and Pharmaceutical Outsourcing Trends and Potential

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Transforming go-to-market strategies for healthcare and pharmaceutical companies across the APAC region



The APAC Pharmaceuticals Market, valued at USD 465 billion based on a five-year analysis, is driven by rising healthcare expenditure, an aging population, and progress in biotechnology and pharmaceuticals. There is growing demand for innovative therapies and generic drugs, reflecting the region's focus on enhancing healthcare outcomes and accessibility. Key factors fueling growth include digital advancements like AI in drug development, expanded local manufacturing and R&D, and the increasing middle-class patient population supported by government health initiatives. Key players such as China, Japan, and India drive the market due to their large populations, robust healthcare systems, and substantial R&D investments, while the growing middle-class patient population and government health programs further boost market expansion.

China excels in product innovation and licensing deals, while India is a major global supplier of generic medicines and vaccines. Government policy focuses on improving the accessibility and affordability of essential medicines through strategies like price regulation, support for generic drug production, and promotion of domestic manufacturing. It enforces price ceilings for essential medicines, fosters the creation of bulk drug parks, and simplifies approval processes to expand access to necessary healthcare services for the population. However, for the pharmaceutical companies, market pressures are prompting pharmaceutical companies in the Asia Pacific region to reconsider their commercial go-to-market strategies. Strategic Commercial Outsourcing partnerships are adapting to provide sustainable growth, enhanced resource flexibility, and improved patient access, effectively capitalizing on the region's expanding USD 10 billion healthcare outsourcing opportunity. **Patrik Grande, Global Head, Healthcare Business Unit** at **DKSH** shares more industry insights with Biospectrum Asia.

- **What are the biggest structural barriers in the Asia Pacific region that need to be addressed to unlock the potential of the pharmaceutical supply chain, especially in light of current trade trends influencing the market?**

The biggest structural barrier in the Asia Pacific region is access to medicines, including delays in availability after approval, challenges with pricing, reimbursement, and access. Addressing this requires improving awareness, education, and support systems to help patients navigate the healthcare system, understand their conditions, and receive appropriate care, including lifestyle modifications. Additionally, the industry must adapt to shifting paradigms by fostering collaboration and rethinking partnerships to enhance the commercialization of medicines. The industry must shift its mindset to embrace new ways of partnering and engaging to commercialize medicines effectively. While the supply chain is important, it is not the sole factor; collaboration across various areas is essential for success.

- **What impact will the supply chain factors have on future trends in the commercialization of the pharmaceutical value chain, as well as the balance between the Asian Pacific and Western countries on these trends?**

The COVID period demonstrated the resilience of supply chains, emphasizing the importance of understanding interdependencies to ensure continuity of supply for patients. Additionally, some countries are shifting their focus up the value chain, moving from being suppliers of active ingredients to becoming recipients of clinical trials and global research centers. This shift, supported by accelerated trends and investments, creates opportunities to work with regulators and potentially expedite the registration of new medicines. For example, China exemplifies this paradigm shift.

As Global Head of Healthcare Business Unit at DKSH, I recognize the challenges we face, such as capacity constraints, funding, sustainability, and an aging population, are not going away and may even amplify. Additionally, new challenges like mental health are emerging. COVID taught us the importance of humility and the need for collaboration, as no single entity can solve these issues alone.

- **How is DKSH navigating the challenges associated with the evolving dynamics of the pharmaceutical value chain?**

Singapore is setting an example by fostering a proactive environment for public-private partnerships (PIPE), ensuring the right investments and long-term plans are in place. The future looks optimistic as we see a tremendous opportunity in the wave of pharma outsourcing that is coming. DKSH has a strong commitment to the Asia Pacific region, where we are present in 13 countries with our headquarters primarily in Singapore, supported by our platform, scale, presence, and 160 years of history. Hence, we are uniquely positioned to capture these opportunities. We are committed to adapting and leveraging our strengths to drive innovation and meet long-term goals, particularly in collaboration with ecosystems like Singapore's, which is known for fostering public-private partnerships to address challenges such as capacity constraints, funding, sustainability, and emerging issues like mental health.

Our history in Asia underscores the significant opportunities we see to strengthen partnerships, not only in countries where we have a long-standing presence, such as Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Vietnam, but also in developed ecosystems like South Korea, Taiwan, and Australia-New Zealand. These markets offer substantial potential for collaboration with partners to provide better care for patients. We aim to leverage these opportunities to drive meaningful impact and foster innovation across the region.

Singapore's approach reflects our belief in the importance of such collaborations in ensuring the right level of investment and to support long-term plans that can deliver measurable impact.With our APAC headquarter in Singapore, we leverage on the strategic positioning in fostering innovation and tackling complex healthcare challenges.

From DKSH's perspective, we recognize shifts in industry paradigms that present an opportunity to collaborate with various partners across the ecosystem. We strive to foster collaborations, particularly in Singapore, which offers the right environment with industry leaders, expertise, and strong examples of public-private partnerships. This will enable us to reflect on progress and continue driving meaningful dialogue in the future.

- **Why are traditional commercial models faltering in fragmented and cost-pressured markets, prompting companies to reassess their go-to-market strategies? How is APAC strategically overcoming these challenges?**

APAC represents half the world's population yet remains underinvested in global healthcare. The region's healthcare landscape is expanding, but not evenly. The healthcare industry in Asia Pacific (APAC) presents vast opportunities, it also

faces considerable challenges. Fragmented systems, complex regulations, rising demand, and uneven access to new therapies continue to slow progress. While some of the APAC markets advance quickly, others face affordability and infrastructure gaps. This has created a region full of potential but held back by structural friction. While the healthcare industry in Asia Pacific (APAC) presents vast opportunities, it also faces considerable challenges.

The pharmaceutical industry in the APAC region outside China, Japan, and India is projected to grow about 4% annually from 2023–2027 to nearly USD 100 billion, yet this still lags some Western markets. Longer, costlier global commercialization timelines often deprioritize APAC, while geopolitical and economic headwinds further strain growth. Traditional commercial models and in-house affiliates struggle with speed, scalability, and efficiency, leading to delayed launches and missed opportunities for patients. For the APAC market, it is essential to have the necessary capabilities, governance, data readiness, and digital tools to sustain high-performing partnerships over time.

The APAC healthcare landscape is changing. A recent research study conducted by DKSH shows that traditional commercial models are no longer enough to meet the growing demands of patients in our region. As APAC's healthcare ecosystem leaders – we must rethink how we go to market. Taking this into account, in Nov 2025, DKSH Business Unit Healthcare launched a three-part whitepaper series to help healthcare and life science companies explore industry trends and current market pressures to re-think commercial go-to market approaches in the Asia Pacific region. The whitepaper series demonstrates how strategic Commercial Outsourcing partnerships are evolving to deliver sustainable growth, resource agility, and improved patient access – successfully harnessing the region's growing USD 10 billion healthcare outsourcing opportunity. Addressing fragmented regulations, pricing challenges, and evolving patient expectations is crucial without requiring significant fixed infrastructure investments while prioritizing higher-impact goals such as innovation and strategic launches, and ensuring patients access to life-changing therapies and treatments. The statistical insights include the analysis from over 50 senior leaders from pharmaceuticals, biotech, and MedTech, and senior industry decision-makers. Commercial Outsourcing is emerging as a strategic go-to market approach because it enables faster market access, operational flexibility, and compliance excellence. It is not just about reducing costs; it is about unlocking growth and resources.

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