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MEDIWORLD Middle East

DR. SUHAIL ALRUKN

CHAMPIONING STROKE AWARENESS AND TREATMENT

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EDITORIAL

Stroke Doesn't Wait- And Neither Should We

Stroke remains one of the leading causes of disability and death globally, with acute stroke representing a true medical emergency that demands immediate recognition and action. Every second counts—literally.

The faster a stroke is diagnosed and treated, the greater the chance of survival and recovery. Unfortunately, public awareness about the signs, risks, and urgency of acute stroke is still limited in many regions, making education a critical weapon in our fight against this silent killer.

In the Middle East, and particularly in the UAE, significant strides have been made in improving acute stroke care. The country has recognized the heavy toll of stroke on its population and has responded with a robust, multi-sector approach. Government-led initiatives, advanced hospital protocols, and increased availability of neuroimaging and thrombolysis treatments have all contributed to better outcomes for stroke patients. Specialized stroke units, rapid-response emergency services, and continuous training for healthcare professionals have further strengthened the UAE's ability to respond swiftly and effectively.

More importantly, awareness campaigns targeting the public have been crucial in educating individuals about recognizing early warning signs—such as sudden numbness, confusion, or difficulty speaking—and the importance of seeking immediate medical attention. The UAE's health authorities have also emphasized preventive strategies, focusing on lifestyle modifications, hypertension control, and diabetes management.

As we delve deeper into this issue of Mediworld Middle East, we shine a spotlight on the importance of rapid diagnosis, technological advancements in stroke care, and the vital role public education plays in reducing stroke-related mortality. Acute stroke is not just a medical condition—it's a race against time. And thanks to the proactive efforts within the UAE, we are seeing promising progress in this life-saving field.

Laique Khan
Editor

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Published Bi-Monthly: Vol 9 | Issue 3 | No. 49
Middle East, Africa, Asia & beyond

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Dr. Suhail AlRukn: Championing Stroke Awareness and Treatment

Dr. Suhail Abdulla AlRukn is a prominent figure in neurology, serving as Consultant Neurologist and Head of the Stroke Program at Rashid Hospital, Dubai. He is also the current President of the Emirates Neurology Society and the MENA Stroke Organization. A graduate of UAE University, Dr. AlRukn completed his neurology residency at McGill University and obtained certification from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. He further specialized with a fellowship in Cerebrovascular Disease and Stroke at Montreal General Hospital.

Dr. AlRukn is best known for his pioneering efforts in stroke care in the UAE, having established the country's first certified stroke unit. His professional focus spans acute stroke management, stroke unit development, and post-stroke rehabilitation. An internationally recognized speaker and researcher, he has numerous publications in the field of stroke.

In addition to his clinical and academic contributions, Dr. AlRukn is the founder and chairman of the Neurology Residency Program in Dubai since 2013 and chairs the Dubai Scientific & Research Ethical Committee. He also manages the Movement Disorders Clinic at Rashid Hospital and has keen interests in headache and movement disorder management. His leadership extends to serving on multiple scientific, advisory, and steering committees globally, making him a key contributor to neurological advancements in the region and beyond.

In an exclusive interview with Mediworld Middle East, Dr. Suhail Abdulla AlRukn, Consultant Neurology and Head of the Stroke Program at Rashid Hospital, and President of the Emirates Neurology Society, sheds light on the significant strides the UAE has made in stroke care and public awareness.

Despite stroke being a leading cause of death in the country, public knowledge of symptoms and risks remains limited. To bridge this gap, initiatives such as the Stroke Media Academy and collaborative public campaigns are empowering citizens with life-saving information.

Dr. AlRukn highlights transformative achievements, including the establishment of over 16 advanced stroke centers since 2012, making the UAE a regional leader in stroke care.

He emphasizes the critical importance of recognizing stroke symptoms using the BE-FAST acronym and acting quickly by calling 998.

Under his leadership, Rashid Hospital has earned international recognition, including certifications from the AHA and German Stroke Criteria.

He further underscores preventable risk factors—such as hypertension, diabetes, and smoking—and promotes early detection and lifestyle changes.

Through education, early response, and a united healthcare effort, Dr. AlRukn envisions a future where stroke outcomes continue to improve and lives are saved across the UAE.

Dr. AlRukn, how would you describe the current state of stroke awareness and prevention in the UAE?

Stroke remains one of the leading causes of death in the UAE, affecting over 10,000 people each year. While the country leads the region in advanced healthcare infrastructure and stroke care capabilities, a key barrier continues to be low public awareness around stroke symptoms, risk factors, and management guidelines.

On May 29, 2025, we proudly launched the Stroke Media Academy to raise public awareness of stroke in the UAE. I'm pleased to see stronger collaboration between hospitals, patients, and the media, which helps make meaningful progress in reaching the public with life-saving information about stroke.

Through initiatives like this campaign, we hope to empower the public with the knowledge necessary to act quickly and seek timely medical attention.

What are some of the most significant advancements or milestones achieved under your leadership at the Rashid Hospital Stroke Center?

When I returned from McGill University in 2012, stroke care was not yet a national priority. There were no dedicated stroke centers in the UAE. Today, we have more than 16 advanced stroke centers across the UAE, including six in Dubai alone. This shift marks a significant transformation in our healthcare system.

Stroke is now recognized as a major public health concern by key partners, including healthcare authorities and medical experts. We've seen a fundamental change in how stroke is prioritized and addressed – from prevention to emergency response and rehabilitation.

Across the UAE, government bodies, private healthcare providers, and public institutions are collaborating to ensure that stroke is no longer seen as an untreatable condition. Our collective efforts aim to provide timely intervention, advanced treatment options, and better outcomes for patients affected by stroke.

There's often confusion between "heart attack" and "stroke". Can you explain the difference and how often are these terms misunderstood by the general public?

Many people are familiar with the symptoms of a heart attack—commonly referred to as a "heart stroke." These typically include chest pain, pain radiating to the left shoulder, and shortness of breath. A heart attack occurs when blood flow to the heart muscle is reduced or blocked, leading to damage.

In contrast, a brain stroke—commonly known simply as a "stroke"—is quite different. It happens when blood flow to the brain is interrupted, either due to a blockage (ischemic stroke) or bleeding (hemorrhagic stroke). Stroke symptoms are often painless and subtle, which is why they are often overlooked or misunderstood.

Dr. Suhail Abdulla AlRukn
Consultant Neurology and Head of the Stroke Program, Rashid Hospital and President of the Emirates Neurology Society

Stroke symptoms can be remembered using the acronym BE-FAST, which stands for:

- **Balance:** Sudden loss of balance or coordination
- **Eyes**: Sudden vision problems in one or both eyes
- **Face**: Facial drooping on one side
- **Arms**: Weakness or numbness in one arm or leg
- **Speech**: Slurred or confused speech
- **Time**: Time to act fast—seek emergency medical attention immediately

If any of these symptoms appear, people must call **998** right away. In the UAE, ambulance teams are trained to identify stroke cases and ensure patients are transported directly to the nearest designated stroke center. Do not attempt to drive the patient yourself to a general hospital, as not all facilities are equipped to handle strokes promptly.

Rapid response is critical—every minute counts in saving a life and reducing long-term damage.

Could you elaborate on the Emirates Neurology Society's role in raising awareness and improving stroke care across the UAE?

Over the past 10 years, the Emirates Neurology Society has played a vital role in increasing stroke awareness and improving stroke care across the UAE.

We have led numerous public awareness campaigns, both within communities and hospitals, in collaboration with journalists, newspapers, and social media platforms. We've also made regular appearances on national television to educate the public about stroke prevention, symptoms, and the importance of early intervention.

In addition to local efforts, we have brought international expertise to the UAE by hosting global conferences focused on stroke care and advancements. In 2024, we hosted the 24th World Stroke Congress in Abu Dhabi – the largest stroke-focused event ever held in the region, bringing together over 3,500 participants—including doctors, nurses, rehabilitation specialists, and patients—from around the world.

We've also supported the first-ever Stroke Media Academy in the UAE in partnership with Boehringer Ingelheim, to recognize the vital role of media in shaping public awareness and understanding of stroke.

How does Rashid Hospital ensure rapid response and treatment for stroke cases, and what makes its Stroke Center one of the leading centers in the region?

I'm extremely proud to say that, under the guidance of our government's leadership, the UAE has become a beacon—what I like to call the "diamond"—of stroke care in the Middle East.

Rashid Hospital was the first facility outside of Germany to receive accreditation as a certified Stroke Center under German Stroke Criteria and the first in the Middle East to be certified by the American Heart Association (AHA). This milestone reflects our commitment to international best practices in stroke management.

Since 2019, several UAE hospitals have also received AHA certification. Our success is the result of collaboration among local healthcare professionals, international partners, and the strong support of the Ministry of Health and various health authorities. I'm also proud to note that the Middle East North Africa Stroke Organization (MENASO)—the largest regional stroke network—is based in Dubai, further emphasizing our leadership in this field.

All of these efforts reflect the UAE's commitment to delivering world-class stroke care and ensuring that patients receive rapid, effective treatment when every second counts.

In addition to local efforts, we have brought international expertise to the UAE by hosting global conferences focused on stroke care and advancements. In 2024, we hosted the 24th World Stroke Congress in Abu Dhabi – the largest stroke-focused event ever held in the region, bringing together over 3,500 participants- including doctors, nurses, rehabilitation specialists, and patients-from around the world.

Are there specific lifestyle changes or risk factors in the UAE population that contribute to higher stroke incidence, and how are you addressing these trends?

This is an extremely important message that needs to reach everyone—men and women alike. There are several treatable risk factors for stroke, and by managing them properly, individuals can significantly reduce their chances of experiencing a brain stroke. The most critical risk factors we must address include:

Blood Pressure: I strongly encourage everyone over the age of 35 to check their blood pressure at least twice a year. You can do this at your GP's clinic, a family doctor, or even at a nearby pharmacy. If your reading is above 120/80, please consult a doctor. Early detection and management of high blood pressure can prevent a stroke.

Blood Sugar: Around 25% of the UAE population is either pre-diabetic or diabetic. Many are unaware they have elevated blood sugar levels. It's essential to get tested—either with a fasting blood sugar test or an HbA1c test—at least once a year. If the results show abnormal levels, consult your doctor and begin appropriate treatment.

High Cholesterol: A silent threat affecting people even in their 30s. Many individuals are completely unaware they have it. Regular screening can help detect and manage this silent risk factor before it leads to serious consequences.

Physical Inactivity: Multiple international and local studies have shown that just 30 minutes of brisk walking three times a week can reduce the risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and stroke by up to 50%. You don't need to jog—just a fast-paced walk is enough. Of course, more vigorous exercise is even better if you're able to do it.

Smoking: A significant contributor to high blood pressure and stroke, especially among youth. My strong advice is to quit smoking. Reducing or eliminating this habit can make a tremendous difference not only for your health but also for your loved ones.

These are manageable risks. Through better education, early screening, and lifestyle changes, we can collectively reduce the burden of stroke in the UAE. Prevention truly is the best cure.

Can you share an example of how timely treatment has saved a patient's life?

One particular case that stands out involved a 29-year-old man who suffered a stroke while caring for his child. Suddenly, he developed facial drooping and slurred speech before collapsing to the ground.

The wife recognized something was seriously wrong and immediately called 998. Within just 10 minutes, the emergency team arrived. Because of their specialized training in stroke response, they quickly assessed his condition and rushed him to the nearest certified Stroke Center—Rashid Hospital.

What made all the difference was that he arrived at the right place, at the right time, and received the right treatment.

When he first came in, he was completely incapacitated—unable to speak, walk, or care for himself. Today, that same man is fully recovered. He's back at work, actively engaged in his family's life, and now a father of three.

This story is a powerful reminder that stroke can strike anyone, at any age—but if recognized early and treated promptly, lives can not only be saved but fully restored. It's the difference between lifelong disability and complete recovery. At Rashid Hospital, we strive to turn stroke victims into stroke survivors—and ultimately, stroke heroes.

MEDIWORLD Middle East

Osteoboost Health Launches FDA-Cleared Wearable for Low Bone Density

Osteoboost Health, Inc. has officially launched Osteoboost, the first and only FDA-cleared prescription wearable device for individuals with low bone density, marking a major advancement for more than 60 million Americans at risk. As aging populations embrace a lifestyle of strength and independence, Osteoboost introduces a novel, preventative approach to bone health. This at-home device delivers targeted vibration therapy to the spine and hips, the most common sites for osteoporotic fractures, helping to reduce fracture risk before osteoporosis develops. Clinically validated in a gold-standard, double-blinded, placebo-controlled trial, Osteoboost slowed bone density and strength loss by up to 85% in the spine and 55% in the hip among postmenopausal women with osteopenia.

Cleared through the FDA De Novo pathway and designated a Breakthrough Device, Osteoboost combines patented medical-grade vibration technology with ease of use—requiring just 30 minutes of wear daily. Led by CEO Laura Yecies, a veteran entrepreneur, Osteoboost addresses a major treatment gap in bone care, as current therapies typically begin only after a fracture occurs. Already prescribed by over 1,000 physicians nationwide, the device has gained rapid traction among leading medical centers and practitioners.

To improve access, Osteoboost is now available via online consultations in partnership with Beluga Health, enabling patients to receive prescriptions from their own physician or through a streamlined telehealth process. Backed by AARP, Harvard Business School Angels, and Esplanade Healthtech Ventures, Osteoboost Health is redefining the future of proactive bone health management.

Powerful Medical Releases PMcardio 3.0, Elevating Emergency Cardiac Care with AI Precision

Powerful Medical, a global leader in AI-powered cardiovascular diagnostics, proudly announces the launch of PMcardio for Individuals 3.0 across Europe. This latest release dramatically enhances the speed, accuracy, and transparency of ECG interpretation, supporting over 100,000 healthcare providers in making rapid, lifesaving decisions in acute cardiovascular care.

"In acute cardiovascular care, every second is crucial. PMcardio for Individuals 3.0 empowers clinicians during those critical moments—providing instant, explainable ECG interpretations," said Viktor Jurasek, Chief Product Officer at Powerful Medical.

At the heart of the update is Queen of Hearts™, a next-generation STEMI AI ECG model designed to detect both classic and subtle occlusive myocardial infarction (OMI) cases—conditions that often go unnoticed using traditional methods. The platform's ECGxplain™ feature delivers lead-specific diagnostic heatmaps, enhancing clinician confidence by visualizing the AI's reasoning.

New workflow improvements include automated ECG digitization and format detection, streamlining emergency care. Clinically validated in 19 independent studies, PMcardio consistently doubles diagnostic accuracy compared to standard algorithms.

PMcardio for Individuals 3.0 supports 36 core ECG diagnoses and calculates 12 key measurements. For healthcare systems, PMcardio for Organizations offers an enterprise-grade AI platform to standardize and optimize cardiovascular care at scale.

HUPE: Redefining Health with Hyper-Personalized Wellness

Hupe is transforming the future of wellness with its hyper-personalized, data-driven approach to health optimization. With hubs in Dubai, London, and Singapore, HUPE caters to high-performing individuals looking to achieve peak physical and mental wellbeing.

Founded by entrepreneur Sami Malia after his own transformative health experience, HUPE is built on the belief that healthcare should be predictive and preventative—not reactive.

At the heart of HUPE's offering is a holistic, science-backed methodology that includes advanced lab testing, wearable tech integration, and access to a global team of doctors, nutritionists, fitness experts, and health coaches.

Whether addressing fatigue, sleep issues, stress, or long-term vitality, HUPE focuses on uncovering root causes rather than simply treating symptoms.

HUPE's mission is clear: to elevate lives by empowering people with the tools, knowledge, and expert guidance needed to feel and perform at their best—every single day.

By: Laique Khan

In conversation with Mediworld Middle East, Sami Malia, Founder & CEO of Hupe, reveals how a Stage 4 cancer diagnosis at 32 transformed his understanding of wellness and sparked the creation of Hupe – a personalized, proactive health optimization platform.

Dismissing one-size-fits-all health advice, Malia built Hupe to decode each individual's unique biology using advanced diagnostics, wearables, and expert-led guidance.

The three-stage program – Discover, Personalize, and Optimize – empowers members with real-time insights, sustainable strategies, and 360° support.

Hupe is redefining preventive healthcare, offering busy, high-performing individuals a smarter, data-driven path to long-term vitality and well-being.

What personal experiences or challenges led you to establish Hupe, and how do they influence the program's mission and approach?

For years, I put my career above everything, including my health and well-being. That relentless drive culminated in a Stage 4 cancer diagnosis at just 32 years old.

For decades, I was trapped in a cycle of unsophisticated, unsustainable three-month transformations: severe calorie deficits and punishing workouts, only to find myself back at square one six months later. I chased results that never lasted. I followed all the "right" advice: low-fat, high-protein meals and intense gym sessions, yet I constantly felt bloated, inflamed, and exhausted.

I was receiving generic advice from personal trainers and nutritionists, none of whom ever conducted any diagnostic testing. It turns out those egg white omelets on wholewheat bread – a so-called "healthy" breakfast was causing me chronic inflammation. I later discovered I was intolerant to both egg whites and yeast.

Like so many others, I was navigating a fragmented health system – one that focused on managing symptoms rather than uncovering root causes. Eventually, I realized that health isn't about quick fixes or one-size-fits-all advice. It's about understanding your unique biology, physiology, and genetics and making science-backed, strategic decisions tailored to you.

These experiences forced me to question everything I thought I knew about health and wellness. I came to understand that the conventional approach was fundamentally flawed. What we need is a more personalized, proactive method and that lightbulb moment led to the creation of Hupe.

I created Hupe to solve a problem: that fragmented, generic health advice fails to reflect the complexity of the individual. At Hupe, we believe true optimization begins with understanding your body at its deepest level. No two people are the same, and your health strategy shouldn't be either.

Our mission is to empower you with the insights, tools, and expert guidance to make confident, informed decisions that drive long-term wellbeing. This isn't another generic wellness trend, it's a more intelligent, sustainable, and personalized way of living. Hupe is redefining what it means to take control of your health.

How does Hupe's proactive, personalized approach to health optimization contrast with conventional, reactive healthcare models?

Traditional healthcare is largely reactive – it waits for illness to occur before taking action. It's built to manage disease, not to prevent it. This system often relies on broad, standardized treatments that overlook the root causes and focus primarily on suppressing symptoms.

At Hupe, we take a different approach. Our programs are built around prevention, precision, and performance. We leverage advanced diagnostics and continuous data monitoring to detect imbalances long before they develop into chronic issues.

Each program is highly personalized, taking into account your genetics, environment, lifestyle,

and individual goals. This allows us to create a tailored, strategic roadmap for long-term vitality and optimization. It's not just about avoiding illness – it's about unlocking your full potential.

Can you elaborate on the objectives and processes involved in each stage of the Hupe program?

The Hupe 3-Stage Program offers a phased approach to wellness, a precision-designed journey that transforms deep health insights into lasting impact, tailored entirely to you.

Stage 1 Discover – Deep Understanding: This phase centers on uncovering a 360° view of your health. Through comprehensive diagnostics, including a 100+ biomarker blood and urine panel, food and environmental allergy testing, food intolerance testing, a detailed medical intake, and a 60-minute consultation with an Integrative Medicine Doctor – we uncover your goals and identify potential root causes of your symptoms.

Stage 2 Personalize – Targeted Precision: Building on the insights from Discover, we layer in advanced testing where needed – from hormones, gut microbiome, genetics, and organic acids to mold and heavy metals. Based on your results, we design a precision nutrition plan, targeted supplementation strategy, and introduce wearables to track your real-time data. Your dedicated Hupe team, doctor, nutritionist, health coach, and concierge manage every detail for you.

Stage 3 Optimize – Sustained Performance: This is where long-term health transformation takes shape. Over 12 months, we provide continuous tracking, coaching, retesting, and strategic adjustments to ensure your program evolves with you. This stage is delivered with the simplicity and convenience of a single monthly membership.

How do advanced diagnostic tools like DNA analysis, gut microbiome panels, and hormone testing contribute to creating personalized health strategies for members?

Advanced diagnostic tools are the foundation of true personalization. They allow us to move beyond guesswork and provide insights that are unique to each individual. Here's how each plays a role in crafting precise, effective health strategies:

DNA Analysis

Your DNA reveals how your body is designed to function. It gives us insight into how you metabolize nutrients, your predisposition to inflammation, your detoxification pathways, and even how you respond to exercise or stress. This helps us create nutrition, fitness, and lifestyle plans that work with your biology, not against it.

Gut Microbiome Panels

Your gut health impacts everything – from digestion and immunity to mood and energy levels. A gut microbiome panel shows us the balance (or imbalance) of bacteria, fungi, and other organisms in your digestive tract. We can detect overgrowths, deficiencies, or markers of inflammation and tailor interventions like probiotics, dietary adjustments, and gut-healing protocols accordingly.

Hormone Testing

Hormones are your body's signaling system – they regulate sleep, mood, energy, metabolism, and more. Imbalances can cause fatigue, weight gain, poor recovery, or low libido. By analyzing hormones like cortisol, thyroid, insulin, estrogen, and testosterone, we can address dysfunction at the root and help restore optimal balance through targeted nutrition, supplementation, and lifestyle changes.

In what ways do wearable devices, such as the Ultrahuman Ring AIR and M1 Continuous Glucose Monitor, enhance the real-time tracking and overall effectiveness of the program?

Wearable devices like the Ultrahuman Ring AIR and the M1 Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM) play a critical role in making health optimization dynamic, real-time, and highly responsive.

By continuously tracking key metrics such as sleep quality, heart rate variability (HRV), recovery, glucose levels, and stress responses, wearable tech provides a moment-to-moment understanding of how your body is responding to your lifestyle, from nutrition and training to stress and environment.

The CGM, for example, offers immediate insights into how specific foods affect your blood sugar. You'll learn which meals lead to spikes and crashes — often the root cause of fatigue, brain fog, and intense cravings. By understanding and avoiding the foods that destabilize your blood sugar, you're empowered to make smarter dietary choices that enhance energy, focus, and long-term metabolic health.

Real-time data turns passive habits into active decisions. It allows the Hupe members dedicated wellness team to make timely, personalized adjustments and helps them take control of their health on a daily basis — not just at check-ups.

Who comprises the multidisciplinary Wellness Team, and how do they collaborate to tailor and implement individualized health plans for members?

Hupe's multidisciplinary Wellness Team brings together leading experts in Integrative Medicine, Clinical Nutrition, Sports Medicine, and Health Coaching — all working in close collaboration to craft a truly personalized and highly effective health strategy for each member.

Unlike traditional models that rely on isolated consultations, our team meets regularly to collectively review your data, align on strategy, and adapt your protocol as your body evolves. It's a continuous, expert-led process — not a one-time assessment.

This collaborative approach ensures that every decision is:

- Informed by the latest data and diagnostics
- Integrated across all aspects of your health
- Individually tailored to support real, sustainable results

At Hupe, your health is not managed in silos, it's optimized by a team that's always in sync and fully invested in your progress.

What measures are in place within the 12-month Optimize stage to ensure that members maintain and build upon the health improvements achieved in earlier stages?

The Hupe Wellness Team will develop a clear set of Key Performance Indicators tailored to each member's unique goals and diagnostic results. These KPIs serve as measurable markers of progress — whether it's improved sleep, enhanced performance, balanced hormones, or sustained energy levels.

During the Optimize stage, Hupe's Health Coaches play a central role in supporting to implement the wellness strategy. Through regular check-ins, they provide accountability, guidance, and day-to-day support as you work toward your goals.

As your body evolves, so does your plan. Your strategy will continuously adapt, always aligned with your goals, lifestyle, and progress.

At Hupe, it's not just about managing health — it's about integrating it seamlessly into your life. We handle the details so that you can focus on life.

Who is the ideal candidate for the Hupe program, and how does the program accommodate individuals with varying health goals and lifestyles?

Our ideal member is a high-achieving individual—whether a busy executive, entrepreneur, or multitasking parent, aged 35–55, who values results, efficiency, and personalized wellness. They lead demanding lives, juggle packed schedules, and are constantly balancing ambition with wellbeing. With limited time and a desire for clarity, they seek science-backed solutions that are both intelligent and actionable. They want to understand the why behind every recommendation, prefer data over guesswork, and expect expert guidance coupled with convenience.

Hupe is built for this lifestyle. With concierge support and a fully tech-enabled platform, 95% of the program can be completed from home or on the go—whether that's between meetings, while traveling, or after the school run. Once diagnostics are complete, members can continue their optimization journey from anywhere in the world. Convenience, flexibility, and precision are the foundation of Hupe—and that makes it the perfect fit for those who refuse to compromise on their health, no matter how full their calendar is.

What key performance indicators or metrics does Hupe use to assess the success and effectiveness of its health optimization strategies?

The KPIs are bespoke for each individual member. We track a mix of clinical, functional, and behavioral metrics. These include inflammation markers, hormonal balance, metabolic health, sleep quality, energy levels, glucose control, microbiome health, and lifestyle adherence. But beyond the numbers, success is about how you feel, more clarity, more energy, better performance.

Are there any upcoming enhancements or expansions planned for the Hupe program, particularly in terms of technology integration or service offerings?

Hupe has a defined innovation roadmap to integrate advanced technology and AI at every touchpoint of the Member experience. This includes real-time, personalized insights powered by wearable data, on-demand access to a 24/7 AI concierge for instant answers across all program elements, and dynamic dashboards that provide immediate, actionable reporting—all designed to elevate precision, convenience, and engagement.

Aster Guardians 2025: Honoring Global Nursing Heroes

Aster GUARDIANS Global Nursing Award

On 26th May 2025, Atlantis Dubai hosted the Aster Guardians Global Nursing Award, organized by Aster DM Healthcare, honoring nurses whose dedication and compassion have transformed patient care worldwide.

The event was graced by esteemed dignitaries including His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahyan, Cabinet Member and Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, UAE, and who personally honored the winner. Among the prominent figures from Aster DM Healthcare present were its visionary founder, Dr. Azad Moopen, and Managing Director Alisha Moopen, both instrumental in driving the organization's mission to elevate healthcare standards globally. Adding a touch of glamour and inspiration was renowned actress and humanitarian Sushmita Sen, who attended as a special guest.

The spotlight shone brightly on oncology nurse Naomi Oyoe Ohene Oti from Ghana, whose remarkable commitment to cancer care earned her the prestigious award and a prize of USD 250,000. Naomi's tireless efforts in improving oncology nursing practices have made a significant impact in her community, embodying the very spirit of compassionate and innovative healthcare that Aster Guardians seek to recognize.

This global platform not only honors individual excellence but also highlights the critical role nurses play in shaping the future of medicine. With initiatives led by Aster DM Healthcare and its leaders, the Aster Guardians award continues to inspire and empower nurses worldwide to deliver care with heart and expertise.

As the curtain fell on this inspiring event, the legacy of Aster Guardians and the heroic contributions of nurses like Naomi promise to uplift healthcare across borders, lighting the way for generations to come.

Boehringer Ingelheim: Leading the Charge Against Stroke in MEA

With a legacy spanning 130 years as one of the world's leading research-driven biopharmaceutical companies, Boehringer Ingelheim's Middle East & Africa (MEA) operations are headquartered in Dubai. The company also maintains scientific offices in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria, with its footprint extending into East Africa through Nairobi. In 2023, the IMETA region (India, Middle East, Turkey & Africa) achieved net sales of €779 million, reflecting strong commercial and scientific growth.

Boehringer Ingelheim is at the forefront of transforming stroke care in the Middle East and Africa through its regional hub in the UAE. Recognizing stroke as a leading cause of death and disability, the company has launched several initiatives to improve outcomes for patients.

In February 2025, Boehringer Ingelheim introduced a groundbreaking treatment for acute ischemic stroke in the UAE. This medication, containing Tenecteplase 25mg, can be administered as a single intravenous bolus over five to ten seconds, significantly reducing the traditional one-hour administration time. This rapid delivery method enhances the efficiency of emergency care, potentially improving recovery rates for stroke patients.

This initiative complements Boehringer Ingelheim's longstanding "Angels Initiative" and regional efforts to establish stroke ready centers—highlighting the company's commitment to transforming stroke care pathways through rapid innovation and collaboration.

Oussama AlHajj
General Manager and Head of Human Pharma,
UAE & Near East Region, Boehringer Ingelheim

MEDIWORLD Middle East

In an exclusive interview with Mediworld Middle East, Oussama AlHajj, General Manager and Head of Human Pharma, UAE & Near East Region at Boehringer Ingelheim, discusses the company's strategic approach in tackling the growing burden of stroke across the UAE and the Near East.

AlHajj stresses that the company has introduced a new stroke treatment in the UAE that drastically reduces treatment time and aims to enhance emergency care outcomes. This innovative therapy, which is set for expansion across the region, delivers treatment in just 5–10 seconds compared to the previous one-hour protocol-marking a significant leap in acute stroke management.

AlHajj outlines Boehringer Ingelheim's long-standing collaboration with regional health authorities, including MOHAP and ADPHC, to boost stroke awareness and education. Through initiatives such as the Stroke Media Academy, the company is actively engaging media to amplify public understanding of stroke risks and the importance of early intervention.

AlHajj shares that company is deeply invested in patient-centric strategies that integrate education, adherence programs, and digital health tools to better manage stroke risks.

Looking ahead, AlHajj reaffirms the company's commitment to innovation, with over €5 billion invested annually in R&D, including a strong pipeline in cardiovascular and stroke-related areas.

Boehringer Ingelheim aims to continue shaping the future of stroke care in the region through groundbreaking therapies and strategic partnerships.

Boehringer Ingelheim has been a key player in stroke care. How is the company addressing the growing burden of strokes in the UAE and the Near East region?

Boehringer Ingelheim has been at the forefront of stroke care for decades and has played a key role in stroke management in the region. We recently launched a new stroke treatment in the UAE which offers a faster and more effective treatment option for emergency stroke care with plans to expand in other markets in the region soon. In the UAE, we have also partnered with key healthcare stakeholders including the Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP) and Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre (ADPHC) to address the burden of stroke. These longstanding partnerships have laid the foundations for awareness efforts that we are still making. In addition to media events like the Stroke Media Academy, which aims to leverage the media's voice to raise awareness of stroke and the importance of timely intervention, we have a range of public awareness initiatives planned throughout this year.

We also strongly believe in the power that the media holds in health awareness. This is why we have hosted the first Stroke Media Academy in the UAE, in partnership with Dr. Suhail Al Rukn, Consultant Neurology and President of Emirates Neurology Society, and with the support of media professionals.

What are the latest innovations from Boehringer Ingelheim in the prevention and treatment of stroke?

Boehringer Ingelheim is a multinational company driven by research and innovation. We invest more than 20% of our total turnover in developing innovative medications that help improve patients' lives.

In the area of stroke, we are undertaking extensive research and have recently launched a new medication aimed at supporting patients affected by stroke. The new medication can be delivered over five to ten seconds, compared to the previous treatments requiring a one-hour administration process. This simplified and rapid approach facilitates faster treatment administration in emergency settings, reducing both door-to-needle (DTN) times and door-in-door-out (DIDO) times. This can improve patient recovery outcomes and minimize long-term neurological deficits associated with stroke, representing a significant milestone in our continuous efforts to provide innovative treatments.

Could you elaborate on the role of Boehringer Ingelheim's anticoagulant therapies in reducing the risk of ischemic stroke? How are these being positioned in the region?

Our anticoagulant therapies are very well positioned in the region. We work closely with key partners, including healthcare authorities and medical experts, not only to raise awareness, but also to implement initiatives that educate physicians and support healthcare staff. Through these efforts, we aim to enhance the capabilities of medical professionals across the region. By doing so, we are giving back to the community and supporting healthcare providers in delivering the best care for their patients.

Can you share any insights into Boehringer Ingelheim's patient-centric approach to managing stroke risks—particularly in terms of education, adherence support, and digital health tools?

Our commitment to patient-centric stroke care is an ongoing journey. We have engaged in discussions with health authorities across the Middle East, including here in the UAE, where we consider ourselves trusted partners. With such partnerships come mutual responsibility, and we are committed to supporting national stroke care goals in any way that we can.

We also strongly believe in the power that the media holds in health awareness. This is why we have hosted the first Stroke Media Academy in the UAE, in partnership with Dr. Suhail Al Rukn, Consultant Neurology and President of Emirates Neurology Society, and with the support of media professionals.

We deeply value the media's contribution, recognizing that while the support of health authorities is crucial, it alone cannot achieve our goals. We depend greatly on social media influencers and the wider media community to enhance awareness and education to a higher level.

Looking ahead, how do you envision Boehringer Ingelheim's role evolving in the fight against strokes in the region over the next five years?

Our purpose is to transform lives for generations to come. That is why we are investing over 5 billion euros annually in the development of new medications. We are proud to have a strong pipeline focusing on several therapeutic areas, including cardiovascular-renal-metabolic conditions, oncology, respiratory diseases, and stroke. Having recently launched a new medication for stroke; we are committed to continuing our efforts to develop innovative treatments while advocating for early detection and intervention for better health outcomes.

MedTech World: Empowering Global Healthcare Innovation

MedTech World is a pioneering platform dedicated to connecting key stakeholders in the MedTech and healthcare industries. With a mission to foster collaboration and innovation, MedTech World hosts events, conferences, and roadshows that bring together entrepreneurs, investors, healthcare professionals, and policymakers from across the globe.

Founded with the vision of driving progress in healthcare technology, MedTech World has quickly established itself as a leading force in the sector. By creating a space where new ideas can flourish, the platform plays a crucial role in facilitating partnerships that bring groundbreaking solutions to the healthcare ecosystem.

From its beginnings in Malta, MedTech World has expanded its reach to key global hubs, including Dubai, Singapore, and North America, positioning itself as a bridge between startups, investors, and healthcare institutions. The platform's focus on fostering genuine connections and sharing insights has helped accelerate the commercialization of MedTech innovations that ultimately benefit patients worldwide.

As MedTech World continues to grow, its commitment to improving healthcare through collaboration remains at the forefront, ensuring a healthier, more connected future for all.

By: Laique Khan

In an exclusive interview with Mediworld Middle East, Dr. Dylan Attard, Founder of MedTech World, reflects on his journey from surgery to spearheading a global MedTech movement.

Inspired by a desire to help beyond the confines of hospital walls, he launched MedTech World five years ago in Malta.

Driven by authentic networking and strategic relationship-building, the platform has since grown into an international hub, hosting events across continents including the Middle East, Europe, and North America.

Dr. Attard emphasizes the importance of region-specific approaches combined with a global vision, which has helped MedTech World successfully bridge diverse healthcare ecosystems.

With future plans centered on expanding in the Middle East—Dr. Attard envisions MedTech World as a catalyst for global MedTech innovation, where partnerships translate into real-world patient impact.

Could you walk us through your professional background and career path, and what motivated you to launch MedTech World?

I come from a surgical background—I graduated around 12 years ago and initially worked as a surgeon. While I enjoyed the work, I often felt limited by the scope of hospital practice, where I could only help one patient at a time. I have always had a strong passion for events, networking, and venture funding, so it felt natural for me to explore opportunities that allowed me to connect people on a larger scale.

About five years ago, I launched the first MedTech World conference in my home country, Malta. The original goal was simply to host an annual event that would highlight Malta's potential as a hub for MedTech and health tech companies. Since then, the initiative has grown significantly. We have expanded to hosting events in various cities and continents, including the Middle East and Dubai, which has become one of our key focus areas.

MedTech World has experienced remarkable growth since it was founded. What key strategies have contributed to this rapid expansion?

I believe one of our core strengths has always been our focus on authentic, one-on-one networking and relationship building. At the heart of every successful business interaction is a genuine connection, and we have made that a cornerstone of our approach.

When we organize events, it's never just about putting together a conference or having speakers on stage. Instead, we aim to create an environment where participants feel encouraged to share their experiences, discuss the challenges they have overcome, and exchange ideas. This kind of open dialogue not only inspires individuals but also fosters innovation and collaboration, all of which contribute to enhancing the healthcare ecosystem as a whole.

How has MedTech World successfully established its presence across multiple continents, and what challenges have you encountered during this global expansion?

One of the main challenges we have faced is managing different time zones, which can sometimes be surprisingly difficult to coordinate. As we are now active across nearly every continent, it requires careful planning and flexibility.

A key factor in our success has been our commitment to respecting the unique cultures and characteristics of each region. We have made a conscious effort to approach each continent individually, tailoring our strategies to fit local needs and values. At the same time, we have worked to bring these diverse perspectives together on a global stage, creating a unified and inclusive platform for the MedTech community.

Can you share your thoughts on the importance of collaboration among stakeholders in the healthcare

ecosystem, and how MedTech World has helped facilitate these partnerships?
One key lesson from the global COVID-19 pandemic is that during any major healthcare crisis, collaboration across countries is essential. Challenges of this scale can't be addressed in isolation—nations must come together to share ideas, resources, and strategies for improvement.

At MedTech World, we are deeply committed to fostering these types of international collaborations. That is one of the driving forces behind our global roadshows, which take us from Dubai to Singapore, across various European cities, and now into North America. Through these events, we actively bring together diverse healthcare ecosystems from different continents, encouraging dialogue, partnerships, and knowledge exchange to collectively strengthen the global healthcare landscape.

With the global rise of startups, how does MedTech World support entrepreneurs and innovators in the MedTech and healthcare industries?
One of our primary goals at MedTech World is to connect startups with investors. A great idea alone isn't enough—startups need funding to grow, and once funded, they require access to hospitals and broader healthcare ecosystems to implement their solutions.

We focus on bringing all key stakeholders together, including investors, healthcare providers, governments, and policymakers. By aligning these groups, we help create a supportive environment where innovation can thrive and be effectively integrated into healthcare systems, both locally and globally.

How do you envision emerging technologies like AI and precision medicine shaping the future of healthcare?
I believe technologies such as AI and robotics are no longer just buzzwords or passing trends—they are already beginning to transform the way we deliver healthcare. Over the next few years, we will move beyond the initial hype and begin to fully realize their potential.

We are already seeing how these technologies can make a meaningful impact, not only on the healthcare system itself but, more importantly, on patient's lives. At the core of all innovation in healthcare is the goal of improving patient outcomes, and emerging technologies are proving to be powerful tools in achieving that mission.

What are your long-term goals for MedTech World, and what upcoming initiatives can we look forward to?
We are planning to deepen our investment in the Middle East, which remains a key focus for us. In the coming months, we aim to organize several additional roadshow events across various cities, including Abu Dhabi and other locations beyond the UAE.

Saudi Arabia is high on our priority list, and we are also exploring opportunities in Qatar. Expanding our presence in the region is one of our main objectives as we continue to grow and strengthen the global MedTech community.

Looking back on your journey, what has been the most rewarding moment since founding MedTech World?
There have been quite a few memorable moments, but the most rewarding experiences are when a startup secures investment through the connections made at our events and then successfully transitions into real-world deployment within hospitals and healthcare systems.

Seeing a startup go from seeking funding to receiving it at one of our events, and eventually reaching commercialization and directly impacting patient's lives—that is truly fulfilling. It reinforces the purpose behind what we do and the real difference it can make in advancing healthcare.

Dr. Dylan Attard
Founder of MedTech World

Hope, Help & Healing: Dr. Sobia Nasim on Advancing Autism Support

Dr. Sobia Nasim
Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist
Medcare Camali Clinic

By: Laiqe Khan

In this exclusive interview with Mediworld Middle East, Dr. Sobia Nasim, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at Medcare Camali Clinic, highlights the significance of Autism Awareness Month and calls for a shift in focus toward empowerment, inclusion, and personalized care.

Advances like genetic testing and neuroimaging improve diagnosis, while technology—such as virtual reality and speech software—enhances treatment.

Dr. Sobia underscores the importance of inclusive education and employment, urging for policy reform, community-based support, and long-term research to create a truly inclusive society.

Why is Autism Awareness Month so important and what are the key messages that need to be communicated during this time?

We know that globally there has been an increase in the diagnosis of autism, and the question of what leads to this is still under speculation. Most experts say that the increased awareness is helping in recognizing these symptoms. There is also increased training for professionals in being able to diagnose autism, which is leading to more diagnoses.

For Autism Awareness Month, the crucial question is: how can we help individuals on the spectrum reach their full potential and live happier, more fulfilling lives? While diagnosis is important, the real focus should be on practical ways to support and ease their daily challenges. How can we best assist those with autism traits? This meaningful support must be at the heart of Autism Awareness Month.

What recent advances in early autism diagnosis have improved outcomes for children and families?

So, traditionally, diagnostic methods for autism include diagnostic tools like the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS), the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS), and the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R). These tools basically identify the core symptoms of autism, such as social communication deficits and repetitive behaviors or interests. These are performed by people who are trained to do these tests—psychiatrists, neuropsychologists, psychologists, and pediatricians.

However, these traditional diagnostic methods, though highly effective in recognizing autism, do rely on some subjective assessments and there is a degree of variability in diagnosis.

Some of the latest diagnostic techniques and tools are looking at more objective ways of diagnosing autism and may lead to faster and earlier diagnosis. These include things like genetic testing. We know that certain genetic variants, for example the FMR1 gene, are responsible for Fragile X Syndrome, which is the most common single-gene cause known to be associated with autism. Genetic testing can help provide more precise diagnostic information, and in those cases of ASD where the causes are known, it may even reveal the underlying genetic cause.

The other area in which research is being made is neuroimaging—so maybe a functional MRI, which can look at the different specific regions and networks of the brain in individuals with autism and recognize certain impairments in social, language, and cognitive functioning. This is a promising field as well.

Another way of early screening could be the involvement of innovative techniques like artificial intelligence and machine learning, which can analyze children's behavior—videos or certain biomarkers, eye scanning etc. This can lead to some algorithms recognized by AI for early recognition.

Having said that, it is important to note that these advancements are still in the research phase. They need further validation and refinement before they can come into clinical practice. We need a lot more research for this to be approved and safe for clinical use.

What are some innovative autism treatments, and how is technology enhancing communication and daily life?

Current treatments of autism spectrum disorder include early intervention with therapies like Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy. ABA is an intervention approach that systematically helps young people with autism spectrum disorder improve specific behaviors, particularly enhancing social communication, academic skills, and daily living skills while reducing maladaptive behaviors.

Occupational therapy helps with sensory integration and addresses sensory sensitivities. It helps with emotional regulation and looks at fine and gross motor skills. Social skills training and speech and language therapy are designed to improve the ability to interact socially in everyday life. Medication is also being used to manage specific symptoms associated with autism, such as behavioral problems, attention deficits, anxiety, and mood swings. Medication is often part of a comprehensive intervention programme to improve quality of life and daily functioning.

In terms of innovative approaches and emerging

interventions, research is being done on biofeedback and neuro-modulation, which aim to reduce symptoms of autism by improving brain function. Biofeedback enables individuals to learn how to control physiological processes such as heart rate, muscle tension, and brain wave activity. Neuromodulation includes computers, tablets, smartphone apps, and virtual reality technology to design a range of interactive learning tools and games. It also includes interventions like TMS (Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation) and TDCS (Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation) which affects neural activity in the brain through external stimulation and may improve social communication skills in people with autism.

There are also diet and nutrition interventions—many studies are being done in relation to certain diets, but again, these are all under research at present.

Again, these treatments are quite new. We need more clinical trials and studies to make them mainstream. They are still emerging and not part of the treatment guidelines for young people with autism. We need more research in this field, but they are very promising.

How can schools and workplaces create more inclusive environments and better support individuals with autism?

It is important to integrate children with autism into mainstream schooling. Not only does it help young people with autism learn from their peers—social skills, language skills, and behaviors needed to cope in a neurotypical world—but it also fosters understanding of differences among other children, laying the foundation for a more inclusive society.

However, effective integrated education requires close collaboration between parents, professionals, teachers, and the presence of appropriate resources and support systems. Successful integration involves special education services such as access to speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral interventions within classroom settings. Inclusion departments must work closely with mental health and neurodevelopmental services.

Social integration and employment of adults with autism is now a focus of current research. People with autism often have very specific interests and can excel in those fields. Recognizing and optimizing their strengths can lead to long-term employment and benefit companies.

However, some flexibility must be created in work environments to suit people with autism. This includes flexible work arrangements, clear guidelines and communication, individualized support measures, co-worker support, and professional career counselling. This help assess the readiness of the individual and the fields they can excel in.

Whether in schools or workplaces, environmental changes are necessary—like sensory rooms or low-stimulus environments for when individuals become overwhelmed.

What are the current and emerging therapies improving life for individuals with autism?

New advancements in both diagnosis and treatments for autism appear promising. The application of precision medicine in autism treatment can lead to personalized treatment strategies—bespoke plans based on genetic information, biomarker history, environmental exposures, and lifestyle.

Emerging technologies such as gene editing, stem cell therapies, and biomarker development open up new possibilities for treatment and understanding. Assistive technology—like text-to-speech software, speech recognition, customizable interfaces, virtual agents, AI, virtual reality, and augmented reality—shows great promise.

Some of these technologies are already in use. iPads and text-to-speech software are being used for non-verbal children. Weighted vests and sensory balls help manage sensory issues. Picture boards assist with basic communication using simple images. There's a lot of promise for the future.

How critical is family support for individuals with autism, and how can families best help?

Family support is very critical. The key is early recognition. When autism isn't recognized early, conflicts often arise between family members and the individual. Lack of understanding leads to repeated misunderstandings. Family members may see young people with autism as inflexible, unable to see other perspectives and this can create negative feelings and even relationship breakdowns.

Early recognition helps families understand the unique challenges of autism. It allows for compassion and support in navigating those challenges. It also helps build stronger relationships.

Every individual with autism is different. Sometimes, what families read online may not feel relevant to their situation. This is why having a professional on board is key. They can help navigate nuanced situations and provide proper support on the journey.

What is the impact of autism on mental health and well-being, and what steps can be taken to address the mental health needs of individuals with autism?

People with autism do have a higher rate of mental health difficulties. They often struggle with social development in a neurotypical world. As social demands increase with age, it can lead to anxiety—especially during puberty, school transitions, and university life.

Treating anxiety can improve outcomes. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy can help, but sometimes traditional psychotherapy may feel like an added burden for young people with autism. In such cases, medication plays a huge role.

Autism is often comorbid with ADHD. Treating ADHD is crucial in improving attention, learning, emotional regulation, and peer connection. Behavioral therapy and medication are used, but in clinical practice, medication has shown to be more effective—especially as academic demands grow.

> **Whether in schools or workplaces, environmental changes are necessary—like sensory rooms or low-stimulus environments for when individuals become overwhelmed.**

What barriers affect autism healthcare access, and how can systems and community organizations improve support?

We need effective social policies and legal frameworks that promote Autism research so we can gain a deeper understanding of this complex neurodevelopmental condition involving both genetic and environmental factors. Despite progress, autism research has limitations. Most studies are short-term and focus on children, limiting our understanding of adults with autism. Integration of new research into clinical application will need more robust and long-term research.

Savoye: Accelerating Health Logistics

By: Laiqe Khan

Alain Kaddoum
Managing Director, Savoye Middle East

Savoye, a leading one-stop-shop integrator of automated warehouse solutions and software publisher in the Middle East, is playing a pivotal role in optimizing logistics for the healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors across the region.

In a conversation with Mediworld Middle East, Alain Kaddoum, Managing Director of Savoye Middle East, highlights the company's dual focus on robotic systems and powerful software platforms that streamline operations and ensure critical compliance in highly regulated industries.

"Precision and traceability are non-negotiable in pharmaceutical logistics," Kaddoum emphasizes. Savoye addresses these needs through advanced Warehouse Management Systems (WMS), Order Management Systems (OMS), and robotic solutions tailored for cold chain environments.

Kaddoum also details how Savoye's automation-ready ODATiO, a modular end-to-end solution embedded with WMS, TMS and OMS systems, helps healthcare providers transition from manual to automated operations seamlessly. It integrates seamlessly with robotic systems and automated dispensers, optimizing inventory, enhancing picking speed, and reducing human error. Savoye's most ambitious regional project—a fully automated Global Distribution Centre (GDC) located within the Special Integrated Logistics Zone (SILZ) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, for CJ Logistics and iHerb—epitomizes this innovation.

As healthcare continues to demand faster, safer, and more sustainable logistics, Savoye stands at the forefront, empowering the industry with smart, scalable, and future-ready supply chain solutions.

Could you please provide a brief introduction to Savoye and explain how your core expertise in supply chain technology supports healthcare and pharmaceutical industries?

Savoye specializes in providing warehouse automation solutions and supply chain execution software. Our core offerings include automated and robotic systems designed for storage and order fulfillment within warehouses. Additionally, we develop and implement software solutions such as Warehouse Management Systems (WMS), Order Management Systems (OMS), Transport Management Systems (TMS), and Warehouse Execution Systems (WES). These tools are designed to streamline both manual and automated processes, enhancing efficiency and accuracy across warehouse operations, which a critical need in the healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors where precision and reliability are paramount.

How is Savoye tackling challenges in pharmaceutical logistics, especially cold chain integrity and product traceability?

In the healthcare sector, traceability, order accuracy, order tracking, and cold chain management—when required—are all critical. Savoye addresses these challenges by implementing advanced technological solutions, particularly in the area of automated warehouse storage. By using robotics within cold storage environments, we are able to maintain a tightly controlled setting. These robots operate in enclosed, temperature-regulated areas with minimal handover zones between storage and operational areas, thereby enhancing cold chain integrity.

Traceability is especially vital. Each item is stored in a tote, and every tote is tagged with a barcode. These barcodes are scanned and tracked throughout the warehouse, allowing us to monitor essential product details such as production dates, expiration dates, and best-before dates. Our systems provide supply chain and logistics managers with full visibility over inventory and can trigger alerts when products are near expiration. Essentially, we equip warehouse operators and logistics professionals with the tools they need to maintain control, compliance, and efficiency throughout the supply chain.

How are Savoye's automation and software solutions improving efficiency and accuracy in medical and wellness product distribution?

When discussing automation, it's important to emphasize that the transformation must begin with the implementation of robust software solutions to manage and control warehouse

operations. At Savoye, our ODATiO WMS software plays a crucial role in this transformation. It's a highly innovative and flexible system used across various industries, including healthcare. This software manages and orchestrates all warehouse activities, handles inventory tracking, and ensures full traceability of items within the facility.

ODATiO is also designed to be "automation-ready," which means it supports both manual and automated warehouse operations. This allows our clients to transition smoothly to automation whenever they're ready. Moreover, the system can integrate specialized solutions tailored for the healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors, such as robotic picking systems or automated dispensers. These enhancements significantly improve the speed, accuracy, and reliability of medical and wellness product distribution.

Can you share details about Savoye's fully automated GDC for CJ Logistics and iHerb in Saudi Arabia and how it aligns with Vision 2030 and the Health Sector Transformation Program?

When iHerb decided to establish a Global Distribution Centre in the GCC, they considered multiple countries before ultimately choosing Saudi Arabia. There were two main reasons behind this decision. First, Saudi Arabia offers attractive incentives and support for foreign investors and international companies looking to set up operations in the region. Second, the Kingdom represents a significant market, accounting for around 30% of iHerb's regional operations.

Once the location was finalized, the next step was selecting the right logistics partner and technology provider. iHerb partnered with CJ Logistics as their third-party logistics (3PL) provider to operate the facility. Together, they sought cutting-edge technology to support a high-volume, fast-paced e-commerce operation.

Once the location was finalized, the next step was selecting the right logistics partner and technology provider. iHerb partnered with CJ Logistics as their third-party logistics (3PL) provider to operate the facility. Together, they sought cutting-edge technology to support a high-volume, fast-paced e-commerce operation.

This is where Savoye came in. We are designing and implementing a fully automated distribution center equipped with advanced automation technologies and integrated software solutions that manage the entire end-to-end warehouse operation. iHerb, being a pure e-commerce player, required a system with high speed and scalability to handle a large volume of orders efficiently—demands that our solutions are uniquely positioned to meet.This project strongly aligns with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the Health Sector Transformation Program by advancing the Kingdom's logistics infrastructure, promoting innovation, and supporting the growth of the healthcare and wellness sectors through modern, efficient supply chain solutions.

What innovative solutions is Savoye using to meet the high-volume demands of the Saudi GDC?

When we began analyzing the customer data and expectations, it was immediately clear that this distribution center would require extremely high throughput—processing up to 15,000 orders daily. To meet this demand while preserving order precision and an excellent customer experience, we implemented several advanced and innovative technologies.

The core of the operation is our X-PTS shuttle system—an automated storage and retrieval solution that transports totes directly to operators for picking. It's one of the highest-throughput systems available in the market today. Complementing this are our high-speed goods-to-person (GTP) picking stations, where the system automatically selects the appropriate carton size based on the order and synchronizes its arrival with the inventory retrieved by the shuttle system.

This synchronization happens within fractions of a second to ensure a seamless picking process. The cartons are automatically erected using carton erector machines, and the only manual task

involved is the operator placing the items into the cartons.

Once packed, the cartons are automatically closed, labeled, and sorted by destination using automated systems, eliminating the need for manual intervention and ensuring consistency and speed.

All these elements—from high-speed shuttles and synchronized picking stations to automated packaging—are designed to guarantee not only the accuracy and efficiency of order fulfillment but also the quality of packaging. This ensures that customers receive their orders in perfect condition, maintaining iHerb's strong focus on customer satisfaction.

Is this project already completed, or is it still in progress?

The project is being implemented in two phases. The first phase is already live and operational, while the second phase is set to go live in the coming month. The entire system is expected to be fully operational before the end of this year. In the first phase we deployed our ODATiO Warehouse Management System (WMS). ODATiO now drives the facility's main operational processes.

What technologies and systems does Savoye implement to minimize human error and enhance safety and regulatory compliance during medical order processing?

Depending on the area of operation, we deploy multiple systems to ensure order accuracy and reduce the risk of errors. First, because the process is highly automated, the likelihood of selecting the wrong item is already significantly reduced. However, we take additional measures to eliminate any remaining risk. We use advanced scanning systems that scan 100% of the items during order fulfillment to verify their accuracy.

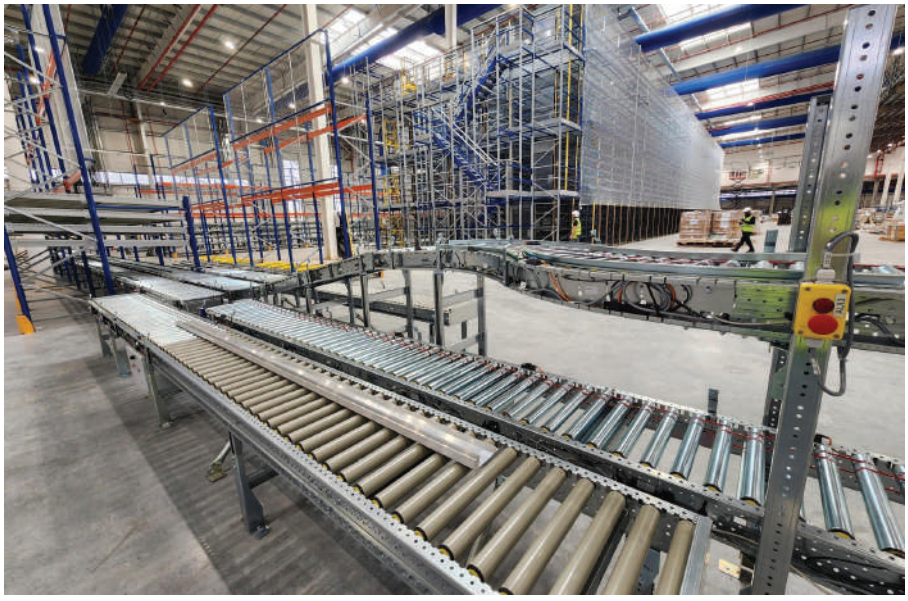
Beyond that, every completed order is placed on a weighing scale, which compares the actual weight of the carton with its theoretical weight. This step helps detect any discrepancies, such as missing or incorrect items, ensuring an additional layer of control.

We also use pick-to-light technology, which guides operators to the correct items and locations, reducing reliance on manual decision-making.

At the software level, our ODATiO WMS plays a critical role. It includes comprehensive track-and-trace functionalities, allowing us to manage inventory accurately and monitor key attributes like expiry dates, best-before dates, batch numbers, and SKU-specific details. Together, these systems significantly improve order precision, safety, and compliance throughout the entire medical order fulfillment process.

From a sustainability standpoint, how is Savoye supporting greener logistics operations in the healthcare sector, especially given the perception that automation is energy-intensive?

While automation was once considered highly energy-intensive, the landscape has changed significantly. Today, the robotic solutions we implement are far more energy-efficient. Most of them are battery-powered and consume very little energy—comparable to charging a laptop. So, from a technology perspective, these machines are much more environmentally friendly than many assume.



Once packed, the cartons are automatically closed, labeled, and sorted by destination using automated systems, eliminating the need for manual intervention and ensuring consistency and speed.

Now, in terms of our direct contribution to sustainability, let me give you two practical examples rather than just marketing claims.

First, we offer a solution called Jivaro, which automatically reduces the height of shipping cartons to match the exact height of the contents. By doing so, we minimize empty space in packages. This reduction in carton size translates directly into fewer delivery trips or better space utilization in transport vehicles—ultimately lowering carbon emissions during last-mile delivery.

Second, we focus on selecting the right carton size for every order. For example, in the iHerb project, we use seven different carton sizes ranging from very small to large (up to 600x400x300 mm). Our system includes a software module that analyzes the item dimensions and calculates the optimal carton size at the order preparation stage. This ensures each product is packed efficiently, avoiding wasted space and unnecessary transportation bulk.

These innovations not only reduce transportation costs for our clients but also contribute to a measurable decrease in carbon emissions—making our logistics solutions more sustainable in practice, not just in theory.

MEDIWORLD Middle East

World's Smallest Light-Activated Pacemaker: A Breakthrough in Pediatric Cardiac Care

A team of engineers and clinicians at Northwestern University has developed the world's smallest pacemaker, a device so compact it can be injected via syringe and activated by light. Designed primarily for temporary use in newborns with congenital heart defects, this bioresorbable device represents a significant advancement in cardiac care. This paper explores the device's design, functionality, and potential impact on pediatric and adult cardiac treatments.

Temporary pacemakers are often required after cardiac surgeries to maintain heart rhythm during recovery. Traditional devices involve external wires and components, posing risks such as infection, tissue damage, and complications during removal. These risks are particularly concerning in pediatric patients, whose delicate physiology demands minimally invasive solutions.

The newly developed pacemaker measures approximately 1.8 mm in width and 3.5 mm in length, making it smaller than a grain of rice. Its miniature size allows for non-invasive implantation using a syringe, eliminating the need for surgical procedures. Once implanted, the device is powered by a galvanic cell mechanism, wherein two metal electrodes react with the body's biofluids to generate electrical energy, thus obviating the need for an external power source.

A key innovation is the device's activation method. It is paired with a soft, flexible, wireless wearable patch affixed to the patient's chest. This patch monitors cardiac rhythms and, upon detecting irregularities, emits infrared light pulses that penetrate the skin and activate the pacemaker to restore normal heart rhythm. This light-based activation allows for precise control without physical connections, reducing the risk of infection and other complications.

The pacemaker is constructed from biocompatible, bioresorbable materials that naturally dissolve in the body after serving their purpose, typically within a week. This feature eliminates the need for surgical removal, reducing patient trauma and healthcare costs. The device's dissolution also mitigates risks associated with long-term implantation, such as tissue scarring and infection.

While the device is particularly suited for newborns with congenital heart defects, its design allows for broader applications. In adult patients, multiple devices could be strategically placed to provide synchronized pacing, offering a more natural heartbeat. Additionally, the technology could be integrated with other cardiac devices, such as transcatheter aortic valve replacements, to enhance their functionality.

The device's development was driven by clinical needs, with input from cardiologists and surgeons highlighting the demand for safer, more efficient temporary pacing solutions. By addressing these needs, the pacemaker has the potential to revolutionize postoperative cardiac care, particularly in resource-limited settings where access to advanced surgical procedures is constrained.

The research team envisions clinical trials within the next five years to assess the device's safety and efficacy in human patients. Further studies will explore the integration of multiple pacemakers for complex cardiac conditions and the adaptation of the technology for other medical applications, such as nerve regeneration and pain management.

The development of the world's smallest light-activated, bioresorbable pacemaker marks a significant milestone in biomedical engineering and pediatric cardiology. Its innovative design addresses longstanding challenges associated with temporary cardiac pacing, offering a safer, less invasive alternative to traditional devices. As the technology advances toward clinical application, it holds promise for improving patient outcomes and expanding access to essential cardiac care.

About the Researchers

The groundbreaking study was co-led by a multidisciplinary team of experts from leading institutions. John A. Rogers, a pioneer in biointegrated electronics, holds the Louis Simpson and Kimberly Querrey Professorship in Materials Science and Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, and Neurological Surgery at Northwestern University. He holds joint appointments at the McCormick School of Engineering and the Feinberg School of Medicine, and serves as the director of the Querrey Simpson Institute for Bioelectronics.

Igor Efimov, an authority in cardiac bioengineering, is a professor of biomedical engineering at Northwestern's McCormick School and professor of medicine (cardiology) at the Feinberg School of Medicine. They were joined by Yonggang Huang, the Jan and Marcia Achenbach Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Civil and Environmental Engineering at McCormick.

The team also included Wei Ouyang, assistant professor of engineering at Dartmouth College, and Rishi Arora, the Harold H. Hines Jr. Professor of Medicine at the University of Chicago. Together, this group brought a rich blend of expertise in materials science, mechanical engineering, cardiology, and bioelectronics to the development of the world's smallest, light-activated pacemaker.

IBS Demystified: Dr. Eyad Alakrad on Advancing Diagnosis and Holistic Care

By: Laique Khan

In recognition of IBS Awareness Month, Dr. Eyad Alakrad, Consultant Gastroenterologist and Director of GI Motility Services at Sheikh Shakhbout Medical City (SSMC), sheds light on the complexities of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)—a highly prevalent but often misunderstood disorder.

Emphasizing the shift from viewing IBS as a vague "functional disorder" to a recognized Disorder of Gut-Brain Interaction (DGBI), Dr. Alakrad outlines SSMC's diagnostic and management strategies rooted in clinical rigor and holistic care.

From the use of Rome IV criteria to non-invasive testing and dietary interventions like the low-FODMAP plan, Dr. Alakrad underscores a personalized approach tailored to each IBS subtype.

He also discusses how stress, sleep, and emotional well-being directly impact symptoms, advocating for integrated mental health support including CBT and gut-directed hypnotherapy.

Addressing persistent misconceptions, he urges greater empathy and awareness, noting that IBS is far more than a "stomach issue." Through community outreach, patient education, and advancing diagnostics, SSMC remains committed to improving IBS care and reducing stigma.

Dr. Alakrad's key message: Gut health is foundational—not just to digestion, but to mental and physical well-being.

April marked IBS Awareness Month. How important is this initiative in helping patients and the public better understand Irritable Bowel Syndrome?

IBS Awareness Month plays a vital role in educating both the public and healthcare professionals about the true burden of Irritable Bowel Syndrome. It sheds light on the natural history of the condition, the latest diagnostic tools, and evolving management strategies. More importantly, it helps bridge the understanding gap between patients and providers, fostering more empathetic, effective care.

Could you briefly define IBS and explain how it differs from other gastrointestinal disorders?

Irritable bowel syndrome is chronic group of gastrointestinal symptoms characterized of recurrent abdominal pain and change to bowel habits. It has high prevalence and can be debilitating. It is important to make a distinction between a syndrome which is a group of symptoms without any identifiable underlying cause, and a disease which is health condition with clear reason behind it.

IBS is often called a "functional disorder." What does that mean, and how does it affect the diagnostic process?

Today, we refer to IBS and related conditions as Disorders of Gut-Brain Interaction (DGBI). These disorders involve disruptions in how the gut and brain communicate—affecting motility, sensitivity, and even immune responses—without any visible abnormalities on standard tests like endoscopy or imaging. Therefore, diagnosis relies on clinical criteria, such as the Rome IV guidelines, alongside a limited number of tests to rule out other serious conditions.

What common symptoms do SSMC patients with IBS show, and how do you differentiate IBS from serious conditions like IBD or celiac? Is there a specific test for IBS, and how is it diagnosed at SSMC?

At SSMC, the most frequent IBS symptoms we see are recurrent abdominal pain along with constipation, diarrhea, or both. To rule out other conditions with overlapping symptoms, such as celiac disease or IBD, we use non-invasive tests—like anti-tTG antibodies, CRP, and fecal calprotectin. If patients exhibit red flag symptoms—such as unexplained weight loss, anemia, or blood in stool—more advanced investigations like endoscopy may be required. We follow a positive diagnostic strategy rather than a diagnosis of exclusion, using the Rome IV criteria and targeted tests to confirm IBS.

What is the key lifestyle, dietary, or emotional triggers you typically see in IBS patients?

We commonly observe several overlapping triggers: poor sleep, irregular eating habits, lack of physical activity, and unmanaged psychological stress. Emotional factors, especially anxiety and chronic stress, often exacerbate symptoms, underlining the need for a holistic, personalized care model.

Are there specific risk factors such as gender, age, or family history that increase the likelihood of developing IBS?

Yes. Women are 2-4 times more likely to develop IBS, and it's more prevalent in individuals under 45. A significant number of patients with mood and anxiety disorders are also diagnosed with IBS. Additionally, post-infectious IBS can occur in up to 10% of people after a gastrointestinal infection. Gut microbiome imbalances, genetic factors, and adverse childhood experiences have all been implicated in increasing susceptibility.

IBS doesn't have a "one-size-fits-all" treatment. What are some of the personalized approaches SSMC uses to manage IBS effectively?

Exactly—there's no universal treatment for IBS. We tailor management based on the patient's IBS subtype: IBS-D (diarrhea predominant), IBS-C (constipation

Dr. Eyad Alakrad
Consultant Gastroenterologist and Director
GI Motility Services, SSMC

predominant), or IBS-M (mixed). For instance, in IBS-C, we might prescribe newer medications that target both constipation and abdominal pain. It's essential not to treat symptoms in isolation—for example, using an antispasmodic in IBS-C can worsen constipation in some cases. Our goal is always to address the broader symptom pattern while minimizing side effects.

How can dietary interventions, such as the low FODMAP diet, improve the quality of life for IBS patients?

The low-FODMAP diet restricts certain carbohydrates that are poorly absorbed and rapidly fermented in the gut, leading to symptoms like bloating, pain, and irregular bowel habits. We guide patients through a structured 3-phase plan: (1) elimination of high-FODMAP foods for 4–6 weeks, (2) gradual reintroduction to identify triggers, and (3) personalizing the long-term diet based on identified sensitivities. When done correctly—preferably with a dietitian—it can significantly improve symptoms and quality of life.

What role does stress play in IBS flare-ups, and how do you integrate mental health support into patient care?

Stress—both acute and chronic—is a well-established trigger for IBS symptoms. We first educate patients about the benign but impactful nature of the condition, which often brings some relief. If mental health concerns are ongoing, we refer patients for cognitive behavioral therapy or gut-directed hypnotherapy, both supported by strong evidence and GI society guidelines. For more severe cases, we collaborate with psychiatrists to select appropriate medications—like tricyclic antidepressants for IBS-D and SSRIs for IBS-C.

Is SSMC conducting research or trials on IBS? Any promising new diagnostics or treatments?

While we're not currently conducting IBS-specific research at SSMC, our institution is highly committed to fostering clinical research across specialties. We're optimistic that opportunities in IBS will grow. Exciting developments include emerging blood-based biomarkers to aid in diagnosis, although more validation is needed. On the treatment front, newly approved medications like Tenapanor for IBS-C and Alosetron for IBS-D have shown promise for patients with severe, refractory symptoms.

Many people dismiss IBS as "just a stomach issue." What are some of the most common misconceptions you encounter?

The most harmful myth is that IBS is "all in the patient's head." Because it lacks visible abnormalities on tests, patients may feel disbelieved or stigmatized—sometimes even by their own doctors. This can lead to delayed care, social withdrawal, and worsening of symptoms. Recognizing IBS as a legitimate, complex disorder is crucial to better care and patient well-being.

How can greater awareness during IBS Awareness Month reduce stigma and encourage earlier diagnosis?

Awareness initiatives can break down stigma, enhance patient-provider trust, and improve understanding of IBS as a serious condition with real quality-of-life impacts. When people understand the disorder better, they're more likely to seek care earlier, leading to quicker diagnosis and more cost-effective management.

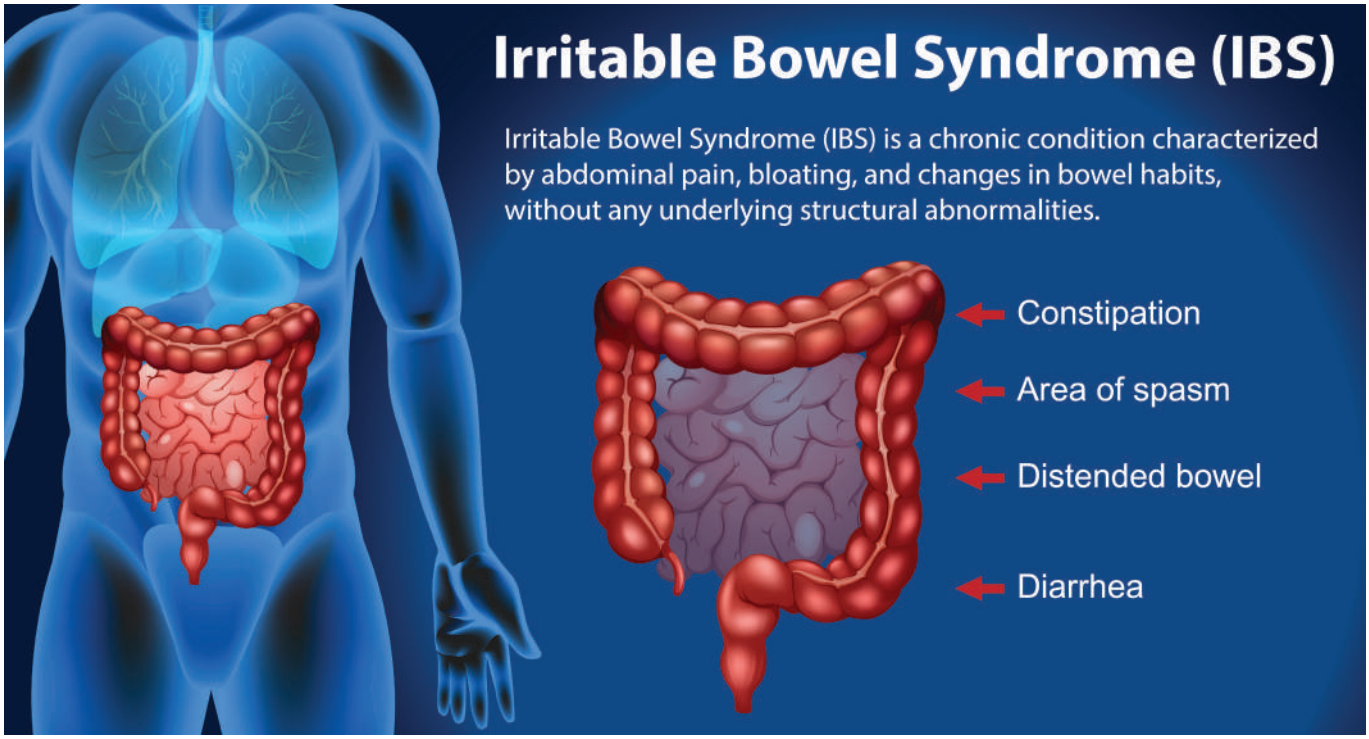
What advice would you give to someone who suspects they may have IBS but hasn't sought medical attention yet?

You are not alone. IBS is common, and there are more resources and support options available than ever before—from online communities to well-informed providers. Advances in diagnostics and treatment have made IBS more manageable. Don't let it define your life—seek medical attention and reclaim your wellbeing.

How is SSMC supporting patients during IBS Awareness Month? Are there any current initiatives or outreach programs? What key message would you share with the community about gut health and IBS?

At SSMC, we prioritize community engagement through media outreach, seminars, and internal education sessions. For example, I recently gave a lecture to internal medicine colleagues on IBS management. This very interview is part of that mission—to spread awareness and foster understanding.

My message to the community is simple: Gut health is essential to both physical and mental well-being. The gut-brain connection is real, and understanding it can empower people to make healthier choices, detect issues earlier, and ultimately lead a better life.



Breakthrough in Cell Death Research May Pave Way for Next-Generation Neurodegenerative Therapies

Researchers have discovered how to block cells dying, in a finding that could lead to new treatments for neurodegenerative conditions like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

The team at WEHI in Melbourne, Australia, have identified a small molecule that can selectively block cell death.

Published in Science Advances, the findings lay the groundwork for next-generation neuroprotective drugs for degenerative conditions, which currently have no cure or treatments to stop their progression.

The discovery was made possible through the advanced screening technologies of the National Drug Discovery Centre.

A new hope in the fight against degenerative conditions

Millions of cells are programmed to die in our bodies every day. But excessive cell death can cause degenerative conditions including Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease, with the premature death of brain cells a cause of symptoms in these diseases.

Professor Grant Dewson, co-corresponding author and head of the WEHI Parkinson's Disease Research Centre, said: "Currently there are no treatments that prevent neurons from dying to slow the progression of Parkinson's. Any drugs that could be able to do this could be game changing."

The new study aimed to find new chemicals that block cell death and could be useful to treat degenerative diseases in the future.

To identify novel small molecules, the team worked with researchers in the National Drug Discovery Centre, headquartered at WEHI.

A high-throughput screen of over 100,000 chemical compounds identified one that was effective at stopping cells from dying, by interfering with a well-understood cell death protein.

Co-corresponding author Professor Guillaume Lessene said: "We were thrilled to find a small molecule that targets a killer protein called BAX and stops it working.

"While not the case in most cells, in neurons turning off BAX alone may be sufficient to limit cell death."

Building on decades of pioneering cell death research

The new research builds on decades of world-leading WEHI discoveries in cell death. A pioneering discovery at WEHI in 1988 of a protein that stopped programmed cell death sparked huge interest in the field, and has since led to a new drug to treat cancer.

While drugs that trigger cell death are transforming treatment of certain cancers, the development of cell death blockers -- that could be similarly game-changing for neurodegenerative conditions -- has proven challenging.

The new molecule targets a killer protein called BAX which kills cells by damaging mitochondria, the powerhouse of cells.

Lead author and Dewson Lab researcher Kaiming Li said: "For the first time we could keep BAX away from mitochondria and keep cells alive using this molecule.

"This could pave the way for next-generation cell death inhibitors to combat degenerative conditions."

The study demonstrates the potential to identify drugs that block cell death and may open a new avenue to find much-needed disease-modifying drugs for neurodegenerative conditions such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

The WEHI Parkinson's Disease Research Centre is focusing on its expertise in cell death, ubiquitin signalling, mitochondria and inflammation in the hunt for disease-modifying therapies for Parkinson's.

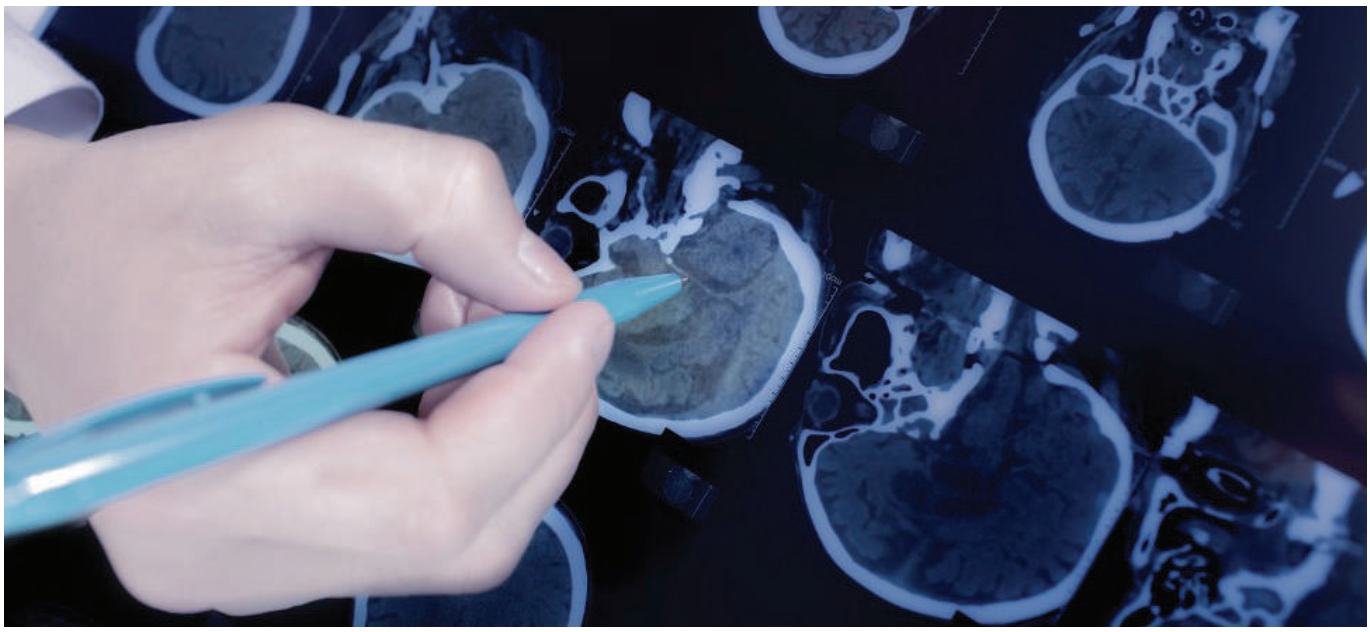
By using a multidisciplinary approach to build understanding of the mechanisms behind the disease, the centre hopes to accelerate the discovery of drugs to stop disease progression, transforming the lives of those living with the condition.

The new research was supported by the Bodhi Education Fund and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Source: Walter and Eliza Hall Institute

MEDIWORLD Middle East

Uncovering New Genetic Drivers of Parkinson's Disease through CRISPR Interference Screening



Parkinson's disease (PD) is a complex neurodegenerative disorder influenced by both genetic and environmental factors. While mutations in genes like GBA1 are known to increase PD risk, they do not fully account for disease manifestation.

A recent study by Northwestern Medicine scientists employed genome-wide CRISPR interference (CRISPRi) screening to identify additional genes that modulate PD risk.

This research highlights the role of the Commander complex in lysosomal function and its impact on glucocerebrosidase (GCase) activity, offering new avenues for therapeutic intervention.

Parkinson's disease (PD) affects over 10 million individuals globally, making it the second most prevalent neurodegenerative disorder after Alzheimer's disease. Characterized by motor symptoms such as tremors, rigidity, and bradykinesia, PD also encompasses non-motor symptoms that significantly impact quality of life.

Genetic mutations, particularly in the GBA1 gene encoding the lysosomal enzyme glucocerebrosidase (GCase), have been identified as significant risk factors for PD. However, not all individuals with GBA1 mutations develop PD, suggesting the involvement of additional genetic modifiers

Methodology

To explore the genetic landscape influencing PD risk, researchers at Northwestern Medicine conducted a genome-wide CRISPR interference (CRISPRi) screen. This technique allows for the systematic silencing of genes across the human genome, enabling the identification of genes that, when suppressed, affect cellular pathways relevant to PD.

The study focused on human cell models to assess the impact of gene knockdowns on lysosomal function and GCase activity

"Our study reveals that a combination of genetic factors plays a role in the manifestation of diseases like Parkinson's disease, which means that therapeutic targeting of several key pathways will have to be considered for such disorders," said corresponding author Dr. Dimitri Krainc, chair of the Davee department of neurology and director of the Feinberg Neuroscience Institute at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Findings

The CRISPRi screen revealed a set of 16 proteins constituting the Commander complex, which plays a crucial role in directing proteins to lysosomes for degradation. Notably, the study found that loss-of-function variants in Commander genes were more prevalent among individuals with PD compared to those without the disease.

These findings suggest that the Commander complex influences GCase activity by regulating its trafficking to lysosomes. Impaired Commander function may exacerbate the effects of GBA1 mutations, leading to reduced GCase activity and increased PD risk.

Discussion

The identification of the Commander complex as a modulator of GCase activity provides insight into the variable expression of PD among GBA1 mutation carriers. By affecting lysosomal function, Commander gene variants may contribute to the accumulation of ⨯-synuclein, a hallmark of PD pathology.

This discovery underscores the importance of lysosomal pathways in PD and highlights the potential of targeting the Commander complex to restore GCase activity and mitigate disease progression.

Implications for Therapeutics

The study's findings open new avenues for therapeutic development aimed at enhancing Commander complex function to improve lysosomal trafficking and GCase activity. Such interventions could be particularly beneficial for individuals with GBA1 mutations, potentially reducing their risk of developing PD. Moreover, this research exemplifies the utility of CRISPRi screening in uncovering genetic interactions and pathways that contribute to complex diseases like PD.

The genome-wide CRISPRi screening conducted by Northwestern Medicine scientists has identified the Commander complex as a key player in modulating PD risk through its influence on lysosomal function and GCase activity. These findings enhance our understanding of the genetic factors contributing to PD and offer promising targets for therapeutic intervention. Future research focusing on the Commander complex may lead to novel treatments that address the underlying mechanisms of PD, ultimately improving outcomes for patients.

The study was led by a multidisciplinary team from Northwestern University. Key contributors include first co-authors Dr. Georgia Minakaki, a postdoctoral fellow, and Dr. Nathaniel Safren, a research assistant professor of neurology. They were joined by Dr. Bernabe I. Bustos, also a postdoctoral fellow, and Dr. Niccolò Mencacci, an assistant professor of neurology. Their combined expertise in neurogenetics, molecular biology, and neurodegenerative diseases was instrumental in the success of this groundbreaking research.

PureHealth Boosts Local Procurement to AED 2.25 Billion, Strengthening UAE's National In-Country Value Program

PureHealth, the largest healthcare group in the Middle East has announced that its total investment in locally sourced goods and services has reached AED 2.25 billion.

In 2024 alone, PureHealth contributed AED 1 billion to the national economy—a 38% increase compared to 2023—directly supporting the UAE's efforts to localize supply chains, promote national businesses, and accelerate economic diversification.

A committed member of the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT) led National In-Country Value (ICV) Program since 2022, PureHealth is on track to meet its target of AED 13 billion in ICV-qualified spend by 2032. Through expanded local sourcing, investment in advanced manufacturing and strategic partnerships with Emirati enterprises, the group is actively contributing to the Make it in the Emirates initiative – a key pillar of the UAE's national industrial strategy, which aims to increase the sector's gross domestic product (GDP) contribution to AED 300 billion by 2031.

Shaista Asif, Group Chief Executive Officer of PureHealth, said, "Our investment in the UAE's industrial ecosystem is rooted in a long-term vision for healthcare resilience. By advancing our In-Country Value goals, we are localizing critical supply chains, supporting homegrown innovation and enabling the development of advanced healthcare manufacturing capabilities. This is not just about meeting today's needs, but building a sustainable, self-sufficient healthcare system that serves UAE communities for generations to come while supporting the nation's economic and industrial ambitions."

Leya Al Damani, Chief Sustainability Officer at PureHealth, added, "Sustainability and localization go hand-in-hand. Through partnerships with UAE-based suppliers that share our environmental and quality standards, we are creating long-term value that benefits both our healthcare system and the national economy. The National In-Country Value Program gives us a powerful framework to scale this impact measurably and responsibly, while also fostering a supportive environment for the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises across the country."

Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre and Novartis Middle East Sign MoU to Boost Public Health Awareness and Disease Prevention

The Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre (ADPHC) and Novartis Middle East FZE have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at enhancing public health awareness and advancing disease prevention strategies across Abu Dhabi, with a particular focus on cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and chronic kidney disease.

The MoU was formalized during the 25th IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC). It was signed by Rashed Obaid Alsuwaidi, Director General of ADPHC, and Mohamed Ezz Eldin, Head of GCC at Novartis.

"This partnership marks a pivotal moment in our efforts to strengthen public health frameworks and address the rising burden of non-communicable diseases," said Dr. Alsuwaidi. "Through strategic collaborations like this, we aim to deliver sustainable health outcomes for our community."

Echoing this sentiment, Mohamed Ezz Eldin stated, "We are proud to collaborate with ADPHC to help drive awareness, promote early detection, and improve disease management practices. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the health and well-being of Abu Dhabi's residents."

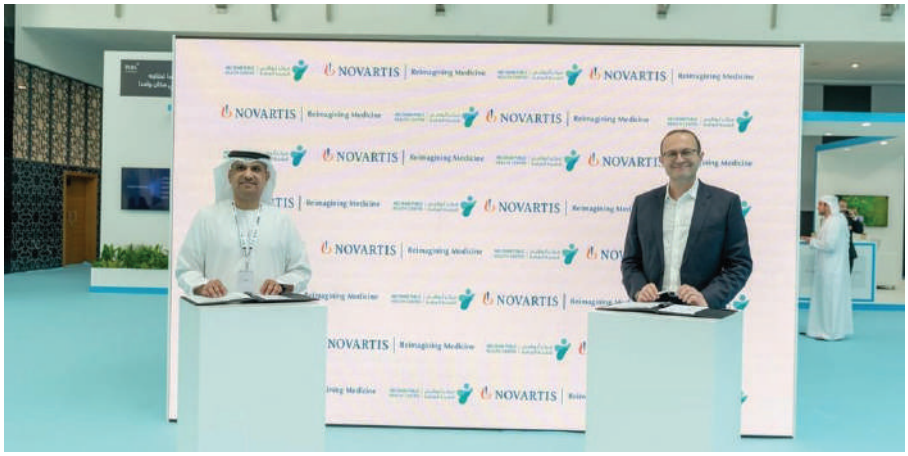
The two-year agreement outlines three key pillars:

1. Disease Awareness – Jointly developing campaigns to educate the public about non-communicable diseases and encourage proactive health behaviors.

2. Disease Prevention – Implementing targeted screening initiatives to identify at-risk individuals early.

3. Best Practice Sharing – Exchanging global expertise to enhance early screening, preventive care, and disease management models.

A joint taskforce will oversee the implementation, with performance evaluated against defined KPIs reviewed biannually to ensure continued impact & alignment with evolving health priorities. (WAM)



Stryker Receives FDA Clearance for OptaBlate® BVN Basivertebral Nerve Ablation System

Stryker, a global leader in medical technologies, has announced that its OptaBlate® Basivertebral Nerve Ablation System (OptaBlate BVN) has received 510(k) clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This minimally invasive system is designed to provide long-lasting relief from vertebrogenic chronic low back pain.

OptaBlate BVN marks a significant addition to Stryker's pain management portfolio, combining its expertise in radiofrequency ablation and vertebral access. Key features of the system include a steerable, curved introducer for targeted ablation, microinfusion technology to maintain hydration and prevent charring, and a rapid seven-minute lesioning capability with 10-gauge access tools.

"We're relentlessly committed to advancing care and improving lives," said Kristen Berg, Vice President and General Manager of Stryker's Interventional Spine business. "OptaBlate BVN reflects our mission to support patients suffering from chronic vertebrogenic lumbar pain."

Dr. Jad Khalil of Michigan Orthopaedic Surgeons highlighted the impact, stating, "BVNA targets a key source of chronic pain in patients with specific MRI findings, often offering meaningful relief when other treatments have failed."

With FDA clearance, Stryker aims to deliver innovative solutions to a largely underserved patient population.

FUJIFILM Expands Regional Presence with New Offices and Technology Center at Expo City Dubai

FUJIFILM Middle East and Africa has officially inaugurated its new regional offices at Expo City Dubai, marking a significant milestone in its commitment to the region's economic, technological, and healthcare development. The new offices will also house the FUJIFILM Technology Center (FTC), designed to provide hands-on training and demonstrations for employees, partners, and customers from across the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Asia.

As a global leader in healthcare, imaging, and printing technologies, FUJIFILM plays a vital role in delivering advanced solutions across the UAE – including diagnostic imaging systems and plans to launch AI-powered screening centers (NURA) aimed at improving early detection and health outcomes.

Over the past five years, FUJIFILM has more than doubled its workforce in the region, with offices in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Morocco, and South Africa. The new headquarters reflects the company's strategic focus on innovation, knowledge sharing, and strengthening partnerships in close proximity to key markets.

H.E. Ken Okaniwa, Ambassador of Japan to the UAE, hailed the move as a testament to the strong UAE-Japan relationship and the country's role as a global business hub. Manal AlBayat, Chief Engagement Officer, Expo City Dubai, welcomed FUJIFILM to a community built on sustainability and innovation.

Masataka Akiyama, President and CEO of FUJIFILM Europe, and Michio Kondo, Managing Director of FUJIFILM MEA, emphasized the FTC's role in showcasing solutions, enabling co-creation, and nurturing regional talent. With strong 2024 performance and anticipated double-digit growth this year, FUJIFILM continues to invest in the region's future through purposeful innovation and collaboration.

DoH and OECD Collaborate to Enhance Regulatory Excellence in Abu Dhabi's Healthcare Sector

The Department of Health – Abu Dhabi (DoH) has announced the signing of a strategic agreement with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to elevate regulatory standards in the emirate's healthcare sector.

Marking the beginning of Phase II in their collaboration, the OECD will conduct a comprehensive study to assess and support DoH's regulatory reform journey. The initiative aims to embed Good Regulatory Practices (GRP), increase transparency, strengthen accountability, and promote high-quality, sustainable healthcare services.

Dr. Noura Khamis Al Ghaithi, Undersecretary of DoH, stated: "A modern, high-performing healthcare system depends on robust regulation. By embedding evidence-based practices and international benchmarks, we are creating a more efficient and resilient regulatory environment, ultimately improving outcomes for patients and providers alike."

This phase builds upon the success of Phase I, launched in 2019, which focused on evaluating DoH's policy framework, strengthening institutional capacity, and incorporating evidence-based decision-making. Many of the OECD's initial recommendations have since been implemented, enhancing regulatory predictability, resource allocation, and overall performance.

Phase II will include a review of progress made on GRP reforms, delivery of targeted technical assistance to reduce compliance costs, and development of a comprehensive public consultation framework. The OECD will assess DoH's regulatory performance using its Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (IREG) framework, examining areas such as regulatory impact assessments, stakeholder engagement, and post-implementation reviews.

An in-person OECD mission to Abu Dhabi is also planned to evaluate how current regulations are implemented, ensuring the new framework meets today's needs while supporting future growth in the healthcare sector. (WAM)

New Khasab Hospital in Oman Nears Completion, Set to Open by 2025

The construction of the new Khasab Hospital in the Musandam Governorate has reached a significant milestone, with over 85% of the project now complete. Scheduled to open by the end of 2025, the hospital marks a major step forward in strengthening the region's healthcare infrastructure.

Built on a sprawling 100,000-square-meter site with a built-up area of 36,000 square meters, the hospital project exceeds RO 48 million in total investment. Once operational, it will offer 164 beds and a comprehensive range of specialized medical services to residents and citizens of the governorate.

Eng. Yousef Yaqoob Amboali, Director General of Projects and Engineering Services at the Ministry of Health, emphasized the project's importance, calling it "a key developmental health project in the governorate." He confirmed that the hospital is on track for completion by year-end.

The facility will house an emergency and accident unit, radiology department, nephrology unit, outpatient clinics, rehabilitation center, multiple intensive care units (including adult, pediatric, and cardiac), maternity and neonatal care, a day surgery unit, as well as inpatient wards. Additionally, the hospital will feature administrative offices, meeting halls, a central sterilization department, and general support services.

Once open, Khasab Hospital is expected to significantly reduce the need for patients to travel to other regions for medical treatment, thereby improving access to quality healthcare services across the Musandam Governorate.

Revolutionizing Cancer Care: Burjeel Unveils Advanced Oncology Center in Sharjah

Marking a significant milestone in cancer care advancement, Sheikh Salem bin Abdulrahman Al Qasimi, Chairman of the Sharjah Ruler's Office, officially inaugurated the Burjeel Cancer Institute (BCI) at Burjeel Specialty Hospital in Sharjah. The event was graced by the presence of His Excellency Abdullah Sultan bin Khadem, Executive Director of Sharjah Charity International, along with senior executives from Burjeel Holdings. This first-of-its-kind comprehensive oncology center underscores Burjeel Holdings' steadfast commitment to expanding access to specialized cancer care services across the UAE.

Professor Humaid Al Shamsi, CEO of Burjeel Cancer Institute and President of the Emirates Oncology Society, expressed his appreciation to Sheikh Salem bin Abdulrahman Al Qasimi for gracing the occasion and inaugurating the institute, which marks a major milestone and a pioneering advancement in cancer care. Sheikh Salem bin Abdulrahman Al Qasimi was also presented with the book Healthcare in the United Arab Emirates by Prof. Humaid Al Shamsi. He was also given a tour of the institute's facilities, showcasing its advanced capabilities.

The new center is designed to deliver integrated surgical and medical oncology services under one roof. The facility ensures that patients in the Northern Emirates can now receive cutting-edge cancer diagnostics, treatments, and procedures without the need to travel outside. It is equipped with the latest diagnostic and treatment technologies and staffed by a multidisciplinary team of subspecialty oncology surgeons and allied health professionals.

Services include chemotherapy, immunotherapy, precision-targeted therapies, and complex surgical oncology procedures. The facility also features dedicated chemotherapy suites designed to enhance patient comfort and privacy, providing a personalized and supportive environment throughout the treatment process.

Philips Introduces Real-Time 3D Intracardiac Imaging to Broaden Access to Minimally Invasive Heart Procedures

Philips, a global leader in health technology, has introduced its innovative VeriSight Pro 3D Intracardiac Echocardiography (ICE) catheter in Europe. This cutting-edge technology delivers real-time, high-resolution 2D and 3D imaging from inside the heart, empowering physicians to perform complex structural heart and electrophysiology procedures with enhanced precision — all without the need for general anesthesia.

Initially launched in the United States, VeriSight Pro is now available to European clinicians addressing the growing demand for minimally invasive treatments for structural heart disease. Designed for procedures such as transcatheter valve repair and left atrial appendage closure, VeriSight Pro allows for more confident decision-making, reduced procedure complexity, and improved patient outcomes.

Unlike traditional transesophageal echocardiography (TEE), which often requires general anesthesia and additional clinical resources, the VeriSight Pro catheter is inserted via the femoral vein and steered into the heart, eliminating the need for TEE and its associated risks. This approach reduces room time, enhances patient comfort, and can shorten hospital stays, ultimately lowering healthcare costs.

At just 3mm in diameter, the catheter houses a fully integrated ultrasound probe capable of generating real-time 3D imaging from within the heart. This transformative capability enables precise assessment of cardiac anatomy, accurate device placement, and immediate procedural verification — all from a single vascular access point.

VeriSight Pro marks a significant advance in delivering efficient, scalable cardiac care, aligning with Philips' commitment to improving lives through meaningful innovation.

Siemens Healthineers Pioneers Greener Clinical Lab Testing with New Sustainable Solutions

Siemens Healthineers has unveiled groundbreaking sustainability solutions for clinical laboratories, enabling healthcare providers to align environmental goals with operational efficiency. At the forefront of this innovation are the Atellica analyzers—now the first clinical laboratory diagnostic instruments to achieve the My Green Lab ACT Ecolabel Certification.

This globally recognized certification evaluates environmental impact across categories such as energy and water usage, manufacturing, and waste management. Twelve Atellica products, including the Atellica Solution and Atellica CI Analyzer, have earned the label, demonstrating reduced environmental impact across the product lifecycle—from design to daily operation.

The Atellica systems not only lower resource consumption—cutting water use and reducing energy consumption by up to 48%—but also deliver fast results, with turnaround times as short as 10 minutes for high-priority tests.

"Our commitment is to help labs thrive sustainably," said Sharon Bracken, Head of Diagnostics at Siemens Healthineers. "With our certified technology and environmental support, we empower labs to reduce their footprint without compromising performance."

Additionally, Siemens Healthineers has launched the Certified Atellica program, offering restored analyzers with like-new performance. This initiative aims to save up to 100,000kg of scrap annually—equivalent to nearly 50 city buses.

As the sole IVD manufacturer recognized as My Green Lab's Accelerator Partner in the EU and UK, Siemens Healthineers is also helping labs achieve My Green Lab Certification—driving measurable, lasting change toward a more sustainable healthcare system.

Abbott Gains FDA Approval for Tendyne™, the First Mitral Valve Replacement Without Open-Heart Surgery

Abbott has received U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for its Tendyne™ transcatheter mitral valve replacement (TMVR) system, marking the first device approved to replace the mitral valve without open-heart surgery. Tendyne is now available for patients with severe mitral annular calcification (MAC), a condition caused by calcium buildup in the mitral valve's support structure that can lead to mitral regurgitation or stenosis.

Traditional surgical repair for patients with MAC is often too risky due to co-existing medical conditions. For those who cannot benefit from Abbott's MitraClip™ device, Tendyne offers a minimally invasive alternative to replace a leaking or narrowed mitral valve.

"MAC stiffens the mitral valve and impairs blood flow, severely affecting quality of life," said Dr. Paul Sorajja of the Minneapolis Heart Institute. "Many patients are too high-risk for open-heart surgery, and Tendyne provides a much-needed solution to relieve debilitating symptoms."

The Tendyne system features a self-expanding, repositionable, and retrievable valve, delivered through a small incision in the chest. Its multiple size options allow it to accommodate a wide range of patient anatomies.

"Tendyne is a vital addition to our structural heart portfolio, offering a less invasive option for treating complex mitral valve disease," said Sandra Lesenfants, senior vice president of Abbott's structural heart business. "This milestone reflects our ongoing commitment to innovation in structural heart therapies."

The approval underscores Abbott's leadership in mitral valve care and commitment to advancing life-changing cardiovascular solutions.

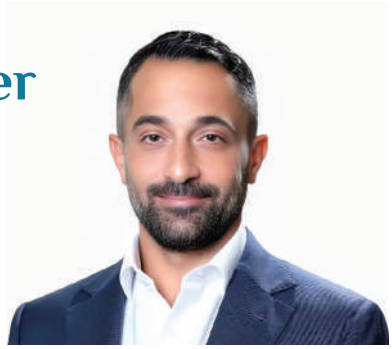
Olympus Appoints Bob White as New CEO to Drive MedTech Transformation

Olympus Corporation has appointed MedTech veteran Bob White as its new Chief Executive Officer, effective June 1, 2025, succeeding Yasuo Takeuchi. White, former Executive Vice President and President of the Medical Surgical Portfolio at Medtronic, brings extensive global experience in healthcare leadership, innovation, and strategic growth. He will also be nominated for election to Olympus' Board of Directors at the upcoming shareholder meeting in June.

Takeuchi praised White's proven track record in transforming healthcare organizations, noting his deep understanding of market needs and commitment to patient care. White expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "I'm honored to join Olympus, a company known for its innovation, heritage, and dedication to advancing medical technology."

White's distinguished career includes leadership roles at Medtronic, Covidien, GE Healthcare, Merge Healthcare, and IBM's healthcare division. His expertise spans R\&D, M\&A, and navigating complex business portfolios. Olympus selected White following an extensive global search initiated in late 2024 to find a leader capable of guiding its next transformation phase.

Nader Abu-Yaghi Joins Pyramids Health and Ability Rehabilitation Medical Center as Director of Healthcare Services



Ghobash Group, a leading and diversified business conglomerate based in the UAE, has appointed Nader Abu-Yaghi as Director of Healthcare Services to lead the growth and expansion of its subsidiaries, Pyramids Health (PHS) and Ability Pediatric Rehabilitation Medical Center (APRMC).

Effective from the beginning of 2025, this strategic appointment highlights PHS and APRMC's shared commitment to enhancing their core capabilities—elevating standards in home-based healthcare and pediatric rehabilitation across the UAE.

Nader's extensive expertise, strategic vision, and dynamic leadership will play a key role in driving the continued success of PHS and APRMC, including the rollout of new service offerings across both entities.

Nader brings extensive experience in the healthcare industry, with a strong track record in business development and strategic innovation across the GCC. He previously held key leadership roles, including Director at NMC ProVita International Medical Center and Senior Vice President of Business Development at TruDoc Healthcare, where he spent nearly five years delivering impactful results.

Commenting on his new role, Nader stated, "As Pyramids Health and Ability Pediatric Rehabilitation Medical Center undergo pivotal transformations, our teams are focused on building upon each organization's core strengths. Guided by our forward-looking vision for healthcare, we're preparing to launch a range of innovative services designed to enhance our capabilities and expand our offerings. At the heart of our efforts is a commitment to better serve our clients and patients, while upholding excellence and striving for market leadership."

Roberta Marinelli Appointed as Lilly's New Leader for Middle East and Türkiye

Lilly has appointed Roberta Marinelli as the President and General Manager for the Middle East and Türkiye (META). In this role, Marinelli will lead the company's operations, partnerships, regulatory affairs and regional strategy, driving the next phase of Lilly's growth in the region.

Marinelli's appointment reflects Lilly's commitment to empowering internal talent with broad international experience to lead strategic markets like META. She will focus on expanding access to patient-centered care and strengthening partnerships that foster healthcare innovation across the region. Lilly remains committed to working alongside governments, industry partners, and the healthcare ecosystem to deliver impactful, people-first solutions.

Commenting on her appointment, Marinelli said, "I am thrilled to take on this role in a region that is redefining healthcare with vision and pace. The META region is a place of enormous opportunity and Lilly is uniquely positioned to deepen its partnerships and bring life-changing innovations to more patients and families than ever before.

"Innovation only matters when it reaches the people who need it most. By working closely with governments and healthcare partners, we will expand access, accelerate impact, and keep patients at the heart of everything we do."

With over 20 years of international experience in the pharmaceutical industry, Marinelli has led diverse teams and functions across Europe and the United States, covering sales, marketing, market access, human resources, and general management. Marinelli joined Lilly in 2012 and is recognized for building high-performing teams, advancing access to care, and driving innovation. Her leadership is shaped by global strategic experience and multidisciplinary academic training. She holds a master's degree in political science; a second master's in systemic counselling and organizational psychology and also an Executive MBA.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEDIWORLD Middle East

20-22 June 2025 — **Dubai**
Pan Arab Anesthesia Conference (PAAC)

20-22 June 2025 — **Dubai**
International Minimal Access Surgery Conference (iMas)

16-18 July 2025 — **Kuala Lumpur**
World Health Expo

8-10 September 2025 — **Dubai**
World Health Expo TECH

9-10 September 2025 — **Riyadh**
MedHealth Riyadh 2025

12-14 September 2025 — **Abudhabi**
Abu Dhabi Annual Anesthesia Congress

6-8 October 2025 — **Nairobi**
World Health Expo

24-25 October 2025 — **Abu Dhabi**
7th Abu Dhabi International Vascular Conference

31 Oct-2 November 2025 — **Dubai**
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Sharjah Airport

Sharjah Airport is the first airport in the Middle East and Africa to offer IATA CEIV Pharma certified cargo handling services through Sharjah Aviation Services (SAS) the official ground handling service provider.

Dedicated Cargo Apron

Supports 13 wide-body freighters, including Code F aircraft.

Dedicated Animal Pen

One of the largest, equipped with a state-of-the-art lab and veterinary team for smooth clearances.

Efficient Operations

Our Cargo Community System (CCS) ensures seamless integration and enhanced customer satisfaction.

IATA ISAGO IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations

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