

Rita Saadeh: MSD is Proud to Envision a World without Cancer

It is not easy to fight against the health challenges. Cancer is considered one of the world's most urgent unmet medical needs, with a massive impact both on society and on the lives of individuals. MSD a leading global biopharmaceutical company has placed significant focus and efforts on the management of cancer. Mrs Rita Saadeh the Oncology business Unit Director for MSD Levant Tells "Human & Health" aspirations of the company in the field of medicine, pharmacy and health according to the following Interview:



Q: Over the last years, MSD has been increasing in spotlight. What are the key updates that you would like to highlight?

A: MSD is one of the leading global biopharmaceutical companies with a 125-year history of working to make a difference in people's lives. We are inspired by a shared vision and a mission to save and improve lives. Today, of MSD is at the forefront innovating for the fight against some of the most urgent global health challenges including cancer. We are inventing for Life and we are proud to envision a world without cancer.

Q: MSD has placed significant focus and efforts on the management of cancer, what were the drivers?

A: Cancer cases continue to rise. By 2025, new cancer cases worldwide are predicted to exceed 20 million annually. Consequently, Cancer is considered one of the world's most urgent unmet medical needs, with a massive impact both on society and on the lives of individuals. That's why MSD is significantly investing to develop innovative cancer treatments that help giving people with cancer better hope for tomorrow.

Q: What is the pharmaceutical industry's role in addressing the health and economic burden of cancer?

A: As mentioned, Cancer is one of the most significant global health challenges today. However, a great progress in cancer care was made in the past few years thanks to advances in prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment.

The role of the pharmaceutical industry is to maintain its investment in research and development to bring breakthrough treatments that address the unmet medical needs of patients with cancer; Also, to ensure fast access to innovative treatments in close collaboration with the different governmental bodies and stakeholders.

Q: We noticed a significant progress in the prevention and treatment of certain types of cancer, how MSD is contributing to this transformation?

A: MSD has been moving the science of oncology forward for more than 30 years. Through our innovation, we are proud to be key contributors to the great progress that has been made in the fight against cancer.

Q: We have recently noticed that immuno-oncology has spread beyond the clinical context of a patient management to be even mentioned in Lebanese sitcoms, what makes immuno-oncology that prominent?

A: Although cancer is considered as a modern disease, its medical history started millennia ago. Research has started centuries ago, yet the major developments only began in the 1900s. The first pharmacological approach was the use of chemotherapeutic antitumor drugs, which are cytotoxic against various tumors; however, the toxicity to normal tissues and the development of drug resistance mechanisms by tumor cells represented important obstacles to overcome.

Subsequently, with the understanding of the DNA structure and specific genes, targeted therapies were synthesized specific for certain tumors. Prolonging survival across a large scope of tumors was still an unmet medical need. In the last 20 years, immunotherapeutic drugs were developed to significantly increase the effectiveness of the treatment and the survival rates of patients with cancer, while maintaining the quality of life.

Q: Lung cancer remains a cancer type with significant unmet medical needs, how does MSD contribute to answering those medical needs?

A: Indeed. In Lebanon, lung cancer is the second most common cancer type among males and third most common cancer type among females. As MSD, we have seen the unmet needs in the management of lung cancer, in particular the need for new treatment approaches that enhance the survival expectations for patients with lung cancer. Hence, in Lebanon, we try to intensify our efforts from prevention, to early diagnosis and treatment. We have worked closely with the different stakeholders to ensure our innovative treatment availability in Lebanon. Currently, our interest has gone beyond the treatment to potentially contribute in preventing lung

cancer and ensuring early diagnosis. This will be possible through raising awareness.

Q: What is your approach to raise this kind of awareness?

A: In Lebanon, we are keen to support our population suffering from cancer to better navigate their journey. We believe in the emerging role of public-private partnership to improve cancer care.

November is the "Lung Cancer Month"; In collaboration with the Lebanese cancer community, we are aiming to raise awareness about lung Cancer, educate about the signs and symptoms of Lung Cancer and promote a healthy lifestyle.

Q: One last word?

A: The touching patient stories that we hear from our treating physicians in Lebanon make us even more committed to our mission of saving and improving patients' lives.

At MSD, we are proud to be key contributors to the ongoing evolution of cancer treatment and remain committed to helping in redefining the survival expectations for patients with cancer.

About MSD

For more than a century, MSD, a leading global biopharmaceutical company, has been inventing for life, bringing forward medicines and vaccines for many of the world's most challenging diseases. MSD is a trade name of Merck & Co., Inc., with headquarters in Kenilworth, N.J., U.S.A. Through our prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies and animal health products, we work with customers and operate in more than 140 countries to deliver innovative health solutions. We also demonstrate our commitment to increasing access to health care through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. Today, MSD continues to be at the forefront of research to advance the prevention and treatment of diseases that threaten people and communities around the world - including cancer, cardio-metabolic diseases, emerging animal diseases, Alzheimer's disease and infectious diseases including HIV and Ebola.