

# PURPLE HEALTH

## A PLATFORM FOR INNOVATION

DRL's endeavour seeks to institutionalise patient-centric thinking and design high quality interventions to address their needs in a bid to promote 'Care Beyond the Pill'

BY USHA SHARMA

Over the past three decades, Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL) has established itself as a leader in the Indian pharma industry. Now, it has taken a step ahead and reached out to patients through its newly launched initiative — 'Purple Health'. Through this endeavour, the company aims to understand patients' needs and provide them better services. MV Ramana, Executive Vice President and Head - Branded Markets (India and Emerging countries), DRL explains about the initiative and says, "We see Purple Health as the next step in our journey, where we are making an effort to institutionalise patient-centric thinking in our organisation, and give this imperative the requisite scale and focus. It is a platform to inspire and promote 'Care Beyond the Pill'."

### Shifting focus

Last year, the company decided to move in a new direction with an aim to develop a deeper empathy for the needs of patients. Its core belief that 'Good Health Can't Wait' has motivated the company to move in a new direction. Explaining the rationale behind launching this initiative, Ramana says, "We looked at the entire gamut of patient needs and realised that these needs range from lack of awareness, late diagnosis and access to treatment. We then examined how we could best leverage our capabilities as an organisation to meet some of these unmet patient needs. Based on this assessment, we defined our offerings around four pillars



MV Ramana, Executive VP and Head - Branded Markets (India and Emerging countries), DRL and Purvish Parikh, Director of Precision Oncology and Research, Asian Institute of Oncology at the launch of Purple Health initiative at ITC Parel in Mumbai

ie., Awareness and Convenient Diagnosis, Access, Medicine Experience and Adherence." (Check Box on Pg 54) he continued further, "Through the 'Purple Health' initiative, we are working to delve deeper into understanding how patients experience their care, and accordingly design high quality interventions that address their needs."

The company has already initiated a couple of projects which have been rolled out across the country. Ramana informs, "We have successfully offered few initiatives to our patients in different therapy areas. Purple Health is all about a holistic and unified platform to drive patient solutions."

So, how is Purple Health different from DRL's past initiatives?

### Purple Health - Packaging

The company has decided to roll out the initiative in phases. In the first phase, DRL has focussed on bringing innovation in packaging. In the first wave of this assessment exercise the company evaluated its 250 brands through a rigorous process and identified five brands that had a strong and consistent record of caring for 'patients beyond the pill'. These five brands span a diverse array of therapeutic areas including hepatology, nephrology, oncology and paediatrics. Giving an overview about the kind of innovation introduced by the company under Purple Health packaging, Ramana divulges, "We have designated the five brands as Purple Stars. Our new design of blister packs have features such as additional stubs to

include essential information needed by patients, a dosing matrix to enable easy recall of medication schedule, colour coding for different strengths of a brand, etc. In the case of syrup bottles, we have developed a drip-free bottle neck to prevent spillage, and rounded bottom of the measuring cup to enable easy cleaning. As we have often discovered, it's the little things that make a big difference to how patients feel about the way their care needs are met."

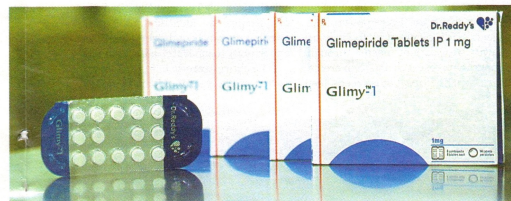
Ramana adds, "This assessment will be an annual exercise. I strongly believe that Purple Health can play a catalytic role in inspiring our business teams to delve deeper in understanding the needs of our patients around the world, and help them manage their disease better. As we move ahead,

we hope to see many more Purple Stars in our portfolio."

The company informs that currently the innovation will be applied to products in blister packaging and bottles across therapies. So when will these innovations in product packaging be seen in the market?

The entire packaging initiative spanned a period of 24 months from research to concept development to implementation. Starting with the India market, the new packaging will be rolled-out in a phased manner over the next six months for 25 of DRL's focus brands, informs the company. Commenting on the roll out activity, Ramana emphasises, "Through Purple Health we hope to be on a continuous journey of understanding patient needs, and developing solutions that address their needs. Along the way, we will evaluate various possibilities where we can enhance the therapy experience for patients. We believe this will enhance the therapy experience for over 20 million patients each year."

The company has also introduced a "structured mechanism to assess its brand offerings on delivering care beyond the pill. Ramana adds, "An important part of Purple Health is a system that we have set up to assess our product brands on being patient centric. We have developed an evaluation scale based on "patient-value score" This objective framework acts as an enabler to help our business teams innovate and progressively move towards a higher degree of patient centricity through our efforts. But, we don't decide ourselves if



we are patient centric! We have constituted a panel of external experts to evaluate our efforts and impact, and let them decide if we can truly call ourselves patient centric.

Since the company has chosen five key therapies for the first phase and is planning to add more to the list in the future, it also needs to communicate the changes to doctors. Talking about their ef-

forts in this direction, Ramana says, "There are multiple ways in which our sales and marketing teams are reaching out to the doctors, demonstrating innovative Purple Packs and explaining all the features."

### IDEO and DRL collaboration: A progressive partnership

To make patient friendly packaging,



DRL partnered with global design and innovation consulting firm IDEO in understanding the patient requirement. Ramana elaborates on the role of the collaboration and says, "The team from IDEO and DRL met a cross-section of patients, doctors and pharmacists across the country, conducting in-depth interviews and observational studies to understand patient's needs. Based on the insights, we redesigned our blister packs and syrup bottles to address the pain-points. We partnered with IDEO, the global design and innovation consulting, and applied the 'Human-Centred Design' approach to finding solutions during the design phase of the project. IDEO's role was to help us uncover the patient needs through ethnographic research and then create ideas/concepts to meet those needs, test

them through rapid prototyping and refine the design based on user feedback."

Elaborating on packaging innovation, Ramana informs that the company would focus on simplifying the patient's medication experience, build convenience into medicine consumption and help the patient with adherence to therapy. Historically, medicine packs have been designed to meet technical and regulatory requirements. "Packs have rarely been designed to ensure convenience or usability. While there have been some efforts to make packs more usable and drive adherence, no platform level solution has ever been implemented. "In our studies, we identified packaging as being currently underserved and an opportunity to innovate," adds Ramana.

The entire exercise has taken over a period of two years and the company

plans to invest around ₹10 crores and to execute this the company has worked with several partners. Sharing a note on this Ramana informs, "Over the course of two years, we collaborated with over 10 partners and undertook a major change management exercise involving seven functional teams to make new packaging system available to patients. And we believe the this added patient convenience will help us to build more credibility and differentiation in the market place."

Since the company has planned to invest around ₹10 crores for the entire packaging exercise, will there be a cost burden to end consumer? (Patient) Ramana informs, "The packaging costs will increase by about 20-30 per cent. But we are not planning any price revision on account of this. We believe the added patient convenience will help us



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#### In pursuit of progress

DRL, as a company, over the past three decades has gradually transformed themselves from being a provider of Molecules to Medicines, and now to Health. So moving ahead what are their future plans? Ramana enlightens, "We

want to continue to build on the Purple Health agenda and ensure across multiple products we are able to deliver care beyond the pill. We would drive more and more of our promotional spend on initiatives under the Purple Health umbrella. We want to create a position for ourselves in the Indian market as the most patient-centric pharma company."

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**Awareness and Convenient Diagnosis:** Critical to the cycle of care is the awareness or the diagnosis of the disease. Through our awareness and diagnosis camps across multiple therapy areas, we ensure that we educate doctors, patients and families on disease symptoms and if needed, support diagnosis through our partners. Example: To raise awareness about need to include zinc along with ORS, Z&D (a zinc sulphate formulation indicated as adjuvant therapy along with ORS) conducted the "Vacchan" campaign with over 18,000 pediatricians. Incidentally the campaign entered the Limca Book of Records for reaching out to maximum number of doctors within 6 days.

**Access:** Access is not only ensuring that medicines are available at every location but also how the company empowers their patients to access expensive therapies. Example: The are providing convenient loans at 0 per cent interest rates for Hepatitis C patients purchasing Resol.

**Medicine Experience:** Who likes taking injections or pills which are hard to swallow! We deliver differentiated products to our patients to help improve their medicine experience. This can mean changing the flavour of a pediatric syrup or make a faster acting medicine. Example: Metformin, a commonly used molecule in management of diabetes has traditionally been a big pill – which surprisingly has been one of the reasons for lack of adherence. When we understood this challenge, launched Metsmall, our brand of metformin, which is 33% less in size compared to other Metformins.

**Adherence:** This has been the one of key challenges for everyone from doctors, governments to pharmaceutical companies. All of us, across the board are trying hard to assist patients to adhere to therapy. Examples: From sophisticated platforms to simple reminders, we offer programs like CHEER, Liv Positive to ensure our patients take medicines on time, while assisting them with diet, lifestyle and counselling support.

