

NEVAKAR



## Spotlight Profile: Nevakar USA

Dr. Puri's first venture, InnoPharma, was founded in 2005 with a focus on developing complex generic pharmaceuticals of sterile injectable dosage forms. This was sold to Pfizer in 2014. Puri went on to found Nevakar, which is a specialty pharmaceutical company, focused on developing innovative products in injectable and ophthalmic space.

We sat down with Dr. Puri to discuss the pharmaceutical industry:

### **You have worked in pharmaceuticals your whole life, what led you down this path?**

When I enrolled in undergrad pharmacy school, honestly I did not know much about pharmaceuticals. I only knew overall healthcare, and physicians take primary role in managing healthcare. In the back of my mind, I was exploring this area, and if I did not like it much, I would have moved on

to medical school. However, once I became a student of pharmaceutical sciences, I found myself getting very excited and motivated by the field of "researching and making medicines" vs the field of "practicing medicines". This led to my graduate education in pharmaceutical sciences, followed by my training and practical experience in the industry, including large and small. At this stage of my career, I find this profession to be very rewarding, motivating and purpose driven!

### **Nevakar's mission talks about repositioning drugs for a better outcome. Can you briefly explain that?**

There are lots of drugs currently in the market that are suboptimal in their efficacy or safety, which is primarily attributed to their suboptimal formulation or drug delivery systems. Nevakar's mission is to first understand where meaningful unmet needs exist due to suboptimal products, which



are experienced by patients and healthcare system. Once we understand and verify the unmet needs, we endeavor to improve the drug product through changes in drug product formulation, drug delivery system, and way of administering the drug or even clinically studying new therapeutic indications of existing drugs. These efforts can be consolidated under the terminology of “drug repositioning”. Better outcomes relate to improving patients’ quality of life and healthcare outcomes.

**What do you see the biggest challenge to be in the pharmaceutical industry today?**

Pharmaceutical industry is very heavily regulated, and due to right reasons. Industry and FDA’s first and foremost responsibility is to protect patients. This requires that each and every aspect of drug product development has appropriate oversight, whether it is from science, technology, operational, regulatory or quality compliance perspective. This sometimes results in financial challenge. Pharmaceutical industry spends tremendous amount of resources, including personnel and financial resources to research, develop and manufacture drugs. Lack of availability of such resources, especially for the research driven and entrepreneurial organizations can limit growth.

Another challenge experienced by the industry in recent times is pricing pressure. This received limelight due to irresponsible actions taken by handful of companies that has led to a political and social backlash. As a result the entire industry has had to take a hard look at its pricing policies. I believe that this has been a good opportunity for industry introspection. On one hand, high cost of researching and developing drug product requires a certain standard of pricing (based on value), but on the other hand, irresponsible pricing policies have emerged over last many years. Pharmaceutical industry has an obligation to continue to provide innovative and enhanced products that are accessible to the healthcare system and patients.

**Where in the industry do you see the most interesting innovations happening?**

Prefacing separation of invention from innovation – pharmaceutical industry is and will be experiencing innovation in several areas, including personalized medicine, precision medicine, therapeutic area specific research (including CNS, oncology, pain management etc), biotechnology, and drug repositioning. Nevakar focuses on “drug repositioning” aspect of innovation, where our mission is to assure that existing molecules are maximized in terms of their potential and benefit to patients and healthcare system, through offering of enhanced and innovative products.

**Where do you see the industry headed in the next 20 years?**

This question ties in to the previous question, of course. Tremendous efforts

in innovation and invention in the pharmaceutical industry will lead to a time when –

- Physicians will be able to cater to individual and informed patients needs in a personalized, subjective and proactive manner.
- Several debilitating diseases will have cure, including several types of cancers, neurological disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease and other diseases that currently patients and physicians just have to manage and treat rather than cure.
- Quality of life for patients will be significantly enhanced as lifespan increases for humans.
- Healthcare system will be value based and streamlined to address patients’ needs in a comprehensive manner.

To address these and numerous other healthcare outcomes, pharmaceutical industry is playing and will play a major role.



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