

Home / 'Our aim was to provide a complete, one-stop solution for diagnostic testing'

'Our aim was to provide a complete, one-stop solution for diagnostic testing'

By *Neelam M Kachhap* on September 7, 2015

Recently Bengaluru-based Medgenome, a genetic diagnostics and research company raised Rs 130 crores (\$20 million) from Sequoia Capital in series B funding. **Sam Santhosh**, CEO, MedGenome shares the plans for the growth of the company, with **M Neelam Kachhap**

You started Medgenome in 2013. How has the journey been so far?

We started as a 'Multi-omics Diagnostics Lab' with an initial investment of \$five million (Rs 30 crores). Our aim was to provide a complete, one-stop solution for diagnostic testing of every aspect of a disease at the molecular level from the DNA to RNA to protein biomarkers dynamically. And we have been able to do that and more. Our mission is to make this testing available and affordable to people with cancers or genetic conditions and their families, thereby actively working towards guarding health. Last year, we raised Rs 24 crores (\$ four million) in Series A Funding, So I think we are on the right track.



Sam Santhosh

What was your revenue last year and what are expectations in future?

Last year, our revenues were around Rs 25 crores and this year we are expecting around Rs 50-60 crores. The market is opening up as more and more doctors are getting aware of genetics implementation and are getting excited to know that such facilities are available in India. We envision that the adoption will be faster now.

What are your current plans?

The idea is to scale up. MedGenome's core lab of 10,000 sq ft is based at Narayana Health City, Bengaluru on the third floor of Narayana Nethralaya building. We will take up another floor to expand our lab with more machines. This is for the clinical diagnostics part. Our second revenue stream is paid research, either from academic institutions which get funding and use our services as partners or pharma companies based in US. We have a US office at San Francisco, but there the lab is small because we do not do diagnostics there. It is a technology office cum lab. We want to scale it a bit more, maybe get a bigger lab.

What will be the driver of the new momentum at Medgenome?

Last year we entered into an exclusive agreement Natera, a global leader in non-invasive genetic testing, to bring non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) to India. Natera's test, known as Panorama, is a non-invasive prenatal screening test that examines foetal DNA in the mother's blood to screen for abnormality in the chromosomes. Panorama is the only screening test in the world that detects triploidy status in the foetus (69 chromosomes rather than 46 chromosomes), and reports whether a 'vanishing' twin was present, i.e. there was a twin but it got absorbed, and is no longer detectable by ultrasound. Panorama was available in the US for the last two years. But now the test is available in India, in an Indian facility. So doctors won't need to send samples to China or the US, it is exclusively available with us and its cheaper. Then there are issues with shipping. So, we see a lot of growth in this segment.

We will start carrier testing soon as there is a lot of demand for carrier testing here for diseases like thalassemia. We will keep the prices of our services as low as possible.

Which areas in India are you looking at for growth?

Most of our sales come from North. Our sales office is located in Delhi. We have a 40 member sales team and are looking to add 20 more this year. We get samples from all over India and a few neighbouring countries also but we have not yet started aggressive sales. We have different MOUs with 35-40 hospitals at present for catering to their genetic testing requirement. We will involve more hospitals this year.

What are the challenges you face in this segment?

One of the biggest challenge is creating awareness among healthcare providers. We hold symposiums and mini-symposiums on a regular basis and also have conferences and try to get our message across to the target audience. But, we need more effort on this front. Also you need to understand the sample flow in this business. A lot of tests may be required before the genetic tests and these are either done in-house by the hospital or are done at a different location. Then the sample comes to us. So, sample flow management is a big challenge. Also people think genetic testing is very expensive. The tests cost Rs 1.5 lakhs in the US or Europe we offer here at Rs 20000. We do not offer concessions on this rate but if the treating physician recommends a economically weaker patient we try to work out a better offer for them. At present we do not have any tie-up with the insurance sector. We will take this up soon.

FEATURED VIDEO

Becoming sedentary is ...



Becoming sedentary is giving birth to NCDs

Tweets by @ExpHealthcare

 **Express Healthcare**
@ExpHealthcare

@JPNadda launches new initiatives to combat #tuberculosis fexp.in/ruC226946 @ExpHealthcare

3h

 **Express Healthcare**
@ExpHealthcare

Call to #ACTION for a #tb - free India fexp.in/lju226879 #tuberculosis @ExpHealthcare

21h

 **Express Healthcare**
@ExpHealthcare

@Novartis #healthcare launches Scaoho (Secukinumab) for

Embed View on Twitter