

Gearing up for Asia's healthcare boom

The sector is growing due to the increasing awareness of quality healthcare and the rising trend in medical tourism, among others, reports **VINCENT WEE**

THE healthcare industry is growing rapidly and over the past decade or so has become a major sector within the Asian region. The boom is mainly due to the increasing awareness of quality healthcare, the rising trend in medical tourism, rapidly ageing populations, higher life expectancy and economic development.

For example, Asia's share of people over 65 in the world population amounted to more than half in 2000 and is projected to increase to 61 per cent by 2050. The greying market in Asia is expected to drive increased demand for quality healthcare products and services.

Changes in public policy, a greater push for healthcare reform and the influx of government investment in healthcare infrastructure are growing priorities among the rapidly developing economies of Asia.

Countries such as Malaysia and Vietnam for example, are working towards consolidation of services through the upgrading of facilities and equipment. Healthcare spending in Vietnam alone is expected to rise to US\$6 billion by 2014, with the government accounting for about a third of that expenditure.

Frost and Sullivan figures show that Singapore will increase its healthcare spend by 6 per cent annually to reach US\$12.6 billion by 2015 due to the Republic's demographic profile, which will see it become the country with the fourth highest number of old people in the world, where the average age will exceed 60 by 2050.

Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia are also making inroads as they take advantage of the boom in the global healthcare market. Regional private healthcare providers such as Parkway, Fortis and Bangkok General Group have built up significant expertise in recent years. According to Deloitte Centre for Health Solutions, South-east Asia, with 63.1 per cent of total health expenditure going to private health, currently has the highest private health expenditure among the various major regions.

Opportunities

Meanwhile, countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and currently Vietnam have limited primary healthcare, outdated clinics and hospitals, low-tech medical equipment, a lack of medical professionals and hospital beds and an overall lack of universal health insurance. Therein lie the opportunities for the region to leverage on global healthcare partnerships to build worldclass healthcare services to cater to an increasingly wealthy population with higher expectations of healthcare.

Frost and Sullivan forecasts that the Asia-Pacific medical market will be worth US\$62.2 million this year, making up a quarter of the global market. In South-east Asia, liberalisation of the services sector in Asean by 2015 is expected to be a key driver for growth.

Medical Fair Asia 2012, which will take place on Sept 12-14 will be taking up three halls at Suntec International Convention Centre, seeks to meet these trends and will give visitors a chance to see an international line-up of leading medical and healthcare players from around the world.

"This year's show, which is in its ninth edition, will have 50 per cent more floor space and is expected to have more than 500 exhibi-

tors and 10,000 trade visitors from around the world.

The exhibition will feature equipment for a wide variety of uses ranging from accident and emergency to laboratory rehabilitation, supplies for ophthalmic, pharmaceutical and orthopaedic use, medical consumables and will even include communications and information technology equipment geared for the sector.

Medical Fair Asia 2012 has received strong industry support from prominent associations. It enjoys the full backing of prominent industry bodies from the Asian region across the hospital and medical sectors.

Since the exhibition debuted in 1997 (under the name HOSPIMedical), endorsement from the trade has grown significantly, and more than a decade on, Medical Fair Asia's stellar line-up of industry support includes the Ministry of Health, Singapore, and associations such as: Asian Hospital Federation, Association of Diagnostics Manufacturers of India, Association of Medical Device Industry (Singapore), Association of Private Hospitals of Malaysia, Persi (Indonesian Hospital Association), Singapore Medical Association and The Federation of Medical Societies of Hong Kong.

Featuring a comprehensive line-up of technology, equipment and solutions for the hospital, diagnostic, pharmaceutical, medical and rehabilitation sectors, the exhibition gives decision makers the opportunity to find out about the latest developments in their field, and to do business on an international platform with some of the industry's best suppliers.

President of the Association of Diagnostics Manufacturers of India, DG Tripathi believes that Medical Fair Asia plays "a vital role in bringing effective products and technologies to the patients and caregivers".

The Indian in-vitro diagnostics (IVD) industry is part of the growing Indian biotech sector that is carving a niche for itself on the international front and the association provides a platform for Indian IVD manufacturers to raise issues and concerns.

"Medical Fair Asia furthers the interests of our members by bringing them closer to their customers and markets which in turn help them to commercialise their product and technologies which is one of the missions of the association," Mr Tripathi added.

"Asia is the growth area among all the continents in the world and is expected to grow



FILE PHOTO

Growing needs: Frost and Sullivan figures show that Singapore will increase its healthcare spend by 6 per cent annually to reach US\$12.6 billion by 2015

faster than other continents at least in the next decade or so. With a large population and growing disposable income, it is only obvious that the Asian medical healthcare sectors would at least triple in the next decade," he noted.

Persi (Indonesian Hospital Association) director Sutoto Mkes, remarked that as healthcare becomes a growing priority in the region, both public and private providers must consider the best methods of delivery if the demands of their populations are to be met.

"With growing affluence, this brings further challenges in the form of a growing elderly population, chronic diseases, and higher ex-

pectations of standards of care. Health spending in developing economies is expected to double over the next decade, outstripping GDP growth," he said.

According to Jacob Thomas, president of the Asian Hospital Federation and Association of Private Hospitals of Malaysia, "private hospitals across Malaysia and the Asian region are constantly scouring for the latest medical technology and equipment in order to provide the best care to patients".

"Medical Fair Asia provides an excellent platform for these private hospitals in Asia not just to procure their needs, but also to network and exchange expertise."

Hot medical tech to be on show at trade exhibition

By **VINCENT WEE**

SINGAPORE'S leading role as one of Asia's fastest growing medical device markets along with the increasing demand for medical manufacturing processes, services and solutions has led to the inaugural Medical Manufacturing Asia 2012 exhibition being held here from Sept 12-14.

Singapore has gained a reputation as a trusted and competitive location for leading medical technology companies to design, test-bed, manufacture and launch innovative products for the Asian market.

In fact, Singapore has emerged as the top location for these companies to set up their key operations such as value engineering and innovation, commercial manufacturing and regional headquarters. Over 30 leading biomedical science companies, including Baxter, Becton Dickinson and Siemens have located their regional or global headquarters as well as manufacturing bases in Singapore.

Medical technology continues to develop at a rapid pace and the Medical Manufacturing Asia 2012 exhibition, to be held at Suntec International Convention Centre, will showcase innovative solutions from the leading market players. A targeted audience of medical technology buyers from across the Asia-Pacific region is expected to attend the show.

"Through Medical Manufacturing Asia we hope to facilitate industry growth and procurement needs, create business opportunities and promote knowledge exchange for all involved in the medical technology manufacturing industry in Singapore and the region," said Messe Dusseldorf Asia (MDA) managing director Gernot Ringling.

"The Asia-Pacific medical device market is experiencing unprecedented growth and is estimated to account for 25 per cent of global market share and reach US\$62.3 billion in revenue by 2012," said Singapore Precision Engineering and Tooling Association (Speta) executive director SC Koh. MDA and Speta are joint organisers of Medical Manufacturing Asia.

According to the show's project manager Michelle Leong, "It will be the most important and relevant trade exhibition for industry professionals in the medical technology manufacturing sector to source for products, meet new business contacts, build partnerships, and keep abreast of industry trends and developments."

The show has seen strong exhibitor interest and will feature some 150 leading international and local companies under five main categories. The main industry segments which will be covered include medical technology components, materials/substance, micro and nano-technology, production/manufacturing and testing.

Among the exhibits will be Powder Injection Moulding (PIM) technology where companies such as Advanced Materials Technologies and Dou Yee Technologies will feature their PIM products for various industries including medical original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

Moulding, design and prototyping manufacturers will also be displaying their capabilities. On show will be plastics injection moulding contract manufacturers equipped with 10,000 and 100,000 clean-room facilities and DIN 13485 quality management, as well as value engineering activities with various polymeric materials.

Among the contract manufacturers with research and development, product design, prototyping, sub-assembly, sterilisation and final packaging capabilities are companies such as Cambus Corporation, Fischer MedTech, Meiban Group, Miyoshi Precision, Racer Technology, Sunningdale Tech and Shin Yan She-no Precision Industrial.

The machining and tooling fabrication segment in medical manufacturing is represented by contract manufacturers with capabilities in in-house design and manufacturing of demanding tooling to support the medical device OEMs of plastic and metal parts.

Precision contract manufacturers offering various machining capabilities such as Fong's Engineering & Manufacturing, Globaltronic Bio-Tech Precision, Miyoshi Precision, Swiss Precision Industries and Yangbum Engineering will be among those taking part in the exhibition.

Contract manufacturers for customised springs and mould and die components such as Advanex (Singapore) and Ka Shin Technologies (Singapore) will present their capabilities in manufacturing quality standard and customised components for mould and die tooling.

Medical manufacturing

Moving on to other segments such as medical manufacturing machine tools, top machine tool builder Agie Charmilles (SEA) will showcase micro-orthopaedic machine tools for organic elements, that is, bone replacement, while Makino Asia will feature their latest micro-machining range of machining centres.

Representing premium Swiss brands such as Tornos, Bumotec, Schneegieger, EWAG, Schaublin and Amsonic, Munger Machine

Tool will present specialised medical technology machining solutions at the exhibition.

In the area of measuring and inspection, brands such as 4T Technologies, Blum Production Metrology, Heidenhain Pacific, Henko Machines Tools, Nikon Singapore, Optical Gauging Singapore and Vision Engineering (represented by Chiptronics Singapore) will feature a wide range of medical manufacturing metrology equipment.

Among elastomeric, electronic manufacturing services players, worldclass solution providers such as Rayco Technologies, C & W Electronics and Singapore Epson Industrial will all be there and will be able to offer complementary competencies for complete supply chain contract manufacturing. Others in the field will include Specialty Coating Systems, which provides Parylene conformal coating technologies, will highlight their coating services for demanding applications within the medical device, electronics, automotive and military industries.

Finally, OEMs will also have a presence at the show. KNF Neuberger GmbH will present their capabilities in the development, production, and marketing of diaphragm pumps for air, gases, vapours and liquids. Martech, one of the US's leading designers and manufacturers of contract branded luminaires and possibly the country's largest manufacturer of low energy compact fluorescent downlights, will showcase their comprehensive design and manufacturing/contract branding services.

With the strong line-up of exhibitors at the Medical Manufacturing Asia show, organisers expect to draw strong visitor numbers of some 5,000 trade visitors. They will be able to see the wide range of new products, solutions and services, and keep abreast of industry trends and developments.