

Brain health

A common goal



Brain health – a global priority

At Lundbeck, we see brain health as being fundamental to good health across the life course of individuals. It does not simply imply the absence of a disorder, but also includes the ability for those living with a brain disorder to thrive, and those who don't have a diagnosis to pursue health and wellbeing.

The world is increasingly relying on "brain capital", where a premium is put on brain skills and brain health¹ (e.g. individual's cognitive, emotional, and social brain resources). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), brain health focuses on areas of brain functioning such as cognitive, sensory, social-emotional, behavioral, and motor domains, and should be considered on a wide spectrum from wellbeing to disorders and disability².

We take a holistic approach to brain health and understand the importance of both promoting brain health and preventing brain disorders. Diagnosis of brain disorders, and access to timely and appropriate treatment are also crucial. Although we primarily focus on providing innovative solutions in the treatment and care of brain disorders, we work across this broad spectrum with our partners to advance better brain health outcomes for all.

It is estimated that brain disorders directly affect about half of the world's population³ and cost up to 10% of the world's gross domestic product⁴ (GDP).

Neurological disorders alone are a leading cause of disability, the second-leading cause of death globally⁵ (accounting for 9 million deaths per year⁵) and a primary driver of healthcare costs⁶. With the world's population rapidly growing older, the burden of age-related neurological disorders, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, will only increase⁷.

In addition, the prevalence of mental health disorders is currently estimated at 970 million people⁸, causing 1 in 5 years lived with disability globally⁹. What's more, around 20% (1 in 5) of the world's children and adolescents have a mental health disorder, with suicide being the fourth cause of mortality among 15- to 29-year-olds¹⁰.

Despite our knowledge about the brain, our strong heritage in the treatment of psychiatric and neurological disorders, and our understanding of those with lived experience, we recognize that significant challenges in brain health and neuroscience still remain.

NEUROSCIENCE IS INSUFFICIENTLY REWARDED – PROGRESS REQUIRES A MORE INNOVATION-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

The brain is arguably the most complex organ in the human body. However, we do not yet fully understand it, and know little about how brain disorders develop¹¹. Neuroscience research is more costly, takes longer and fails at a higher rate than most other types of scientific research¹². But with brain disorders sharply on the increase, it is now more important than ever to continue to prioritize neuroscience. Despite significant progress, the road to uncover cures and treatments for brain disorders is still a difficult one. As such, we need to remove the barriers that are restraining neuroscience innovation and foster an environment that prioritizes research to fully unlock the complexities of the brain.

We believe this is a joint responsibility. Commitments in and investments from both the public and private sectors can collectively foster an innovation-friendly environment in which neuroscience and brain health will thrive.



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We aspire to see brain health being prioritized in the same way physical health is.



The earlier and more we invest in brain health, including neuroscience, the better outcomes we will see. This should include basic scientific research, but also translational research where transformative discoveries can be brought closer to those who need them most.

At Lundbeck, research and development programs are focused solely on the brain, and we reinvest approximately 20% of our annual revenue into neuroscience¹³. We seek to advance our understanding of the biology of the brain, which will allow us to discover transformative new approaches to treating brain disorders.

As we continue to advance neuroscience and deliver innovative therapies, we recognize our innovations are meaningless if people can't access them. Through a variety of programs and efforts, we work to reduce the burden of access and proactively engage with key decision makers to ensure value assessments are based on real-world evidence, include the voice of those with brain disorders and support innovative solutions.



We are wholly committed to restoring brain health and supporting people impacted by brain disorders.



BRAIN HEALTH IS UNDER-PRIORITIZED – THE LIVED-EXPERIENCE VOICE SHOULD BE EMPOWERED, AND UNMET NEEDS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED

Socio-economic determinants of health, such as poverty, discrimination or conflict, have a negative impact on brain health¹⁴. Addressing inequalities on brain health will require action on many fronts and holistic interventions at societal level with collaboration across different disease areas and organizations. Focusing on better data and knowledge sharing is also important to advance brain health. We aspire to see brain health being prioritized in the same way physical health is, and we work with our partners across the world to make sure more resources are dedicated to brain health and its associated disorders.

Many of the currently available treatments for brain disorders are symptomatic and not curative, and date from the 1980s and 1990s¹⁵. This offers little hope and limited outcomes for those living with a brain disorder. Innovative treatments can be key in providing a better quality of life and regaining opportunities, thus also benefiting society at large. We partner with advocacy organizations and medical societies to positively influence the regulatory and policy environment so that novel treatments for brain disorders can reach more people faster.

It is of utmost importance to support people living with brain disorders, address the unmet needs they experience and bring these to the attention not only of researchers and scientists, but also of policy makers and funders. We work to empower the voices of people living with brain disorders through our capacity building programmes, giving the community the tools and support they require to strengthen their share of voice.

On a wider scale, we strive to operate as a sustainable business in line with the Environmental, Social and Governance goals¹⁶ and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals¹⁷ to support the reduction of socio-economic determinants of brain health.

STIGMA IS A BIG BARRIER TO BRAIN HEALTH – THIS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED WITH EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS

Stigma affects the understanding and perception of brain health and its associated disorders, which has negative consequences on access to care and treatment, and on the way brain health is prioritized. Measures seeking to reduce stigma should be a core component of broader strategies that emphasize freedom from discrimination, human rights, and social inclusion¹⁸. According to WHO, stigma on mental health disorders is a major cause of discrimination and exclusion¹⁹.



We are committed to reducing stigma on brain health.



With regards to stigma within neurological disorders, a 2020 survey found that 92% of the respondents feel affected by stigma because of the disorder they live with²⁰. Although significant progress has been made, stigma remains a big issue. At Lundbeck, we are committed to reducing stigma

on brain health. We want to normalize discussions about brain health and its associated disorders, and bring those to policy makers, to healthcare settings, to patient communities and to society as a whole.

To address this, we collaborate with the patient advocacy and the medical communities on a series of initiatives. These include global awareness-raising campaigns on brain health promotion and stigma reduction, and in-depth educational campaigns targeted at policy makers and healthcare professionals. We strive to do as we preach and are taking proactive steps to ensure we promote brain health in the workplace and remain an equal-opportunity and supportive employer for those with brain disorders.

LUNDBECK'S COMMITMENT

We are wholly committed to restoring brain health and supporting people impacted by brain disorders. Our business activities, advocacy community engagement, and interactions with policymakers and non-governmental organizations are guided by clarity of purpose: we are tirelessly dedicated to restoring brain health, so every person can be their best.



Notes

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