

Launching a New Indication in the US Neurodegenerative Disease Market - Lessons from Denali Therapeutics' Targeted Content

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Denali Therapeutics is a biopharmaceutical developer focused on discovering and creating neurodegenerative disease therapies. Indications include Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and ALS. Founded in 2015, the San Francisco-based company has grown its market capitalization to \$3B as of May 26, 2022.

Five days later, on May 31, Denali Therapeutics and Biogen announced the initiation of a phase 2b LUMA study to evaluate the efficacy and safety of Parkinson's disease inhibitor BIIB122 (also referred to as DNL151).

With over 10M people worldwide suffering from Parkinson's, the potential of the small molecule inhibitor is vast, as is the competition.

What strategies have helped Denali Therapeutics distinguish its offerings from the many biopharma companies developing similar indications?

A Split Focus on Targeting Monetary and Market-Driven Partners

Denali has 20+ collaborations worldwide with academic institutions, industry leaders, and patient advocacy groups. From the Michael J Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, to Harvard University, to Biogen, Denali has effectively established a presence among multiple types of Parkinson's stakeholders.

In the US market, multifaceted approaches like this are now necessary. Biotechnology companies focussing on only one "type" of player will be in for a harsh reality. It has become increasingly important in recent years for companies to target various industry players leveraging multiple priority levels.

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Yes, you can still target the most prominent players like Biogen. However, you must also form relationships with other industry parties to present yourself to these household names best. This is especially true within the market for neurodegenerative diseases.

Driving Market Value - Why it Matters for Long-Term Success

Enrolling clinical trial participants for neurodegenerative conditions like Parkinson's can be difficult.

Often, eligible participants are older and more sensitive, relying on their children or caregivers to help make important decisions about their health. For conditions with no clear course of treatment, additional aspects are needed to convince the industry to give your method a chance.

To help curb these potential barriers, Denali has developed a patient-specific microsite called Engage Parkinson's. The sub-branded site guides visitors through an educational journey about the condition.

Strategically formed pages teach viewers about Parkinson's disease, from actual symptoms and diagnostics to clinical trial registration from the very beginning.

Creating a movement-oriented microsite is crucial for organically connecting with patient and provider groups. Rather than focus on its brand, Denali took a step back, creating an educational hub for end-users and influencing parties instead. Movement-oriented content is typically better received than straight-to-the-point technical information.

Denali eases its technological offerings into the formula by presenting it as the ultimate solution to the specific market problem (blocking activity of the LRRK2 protein). By the time page visitors reach this point, they have already formed a subconscious, positive relationship with Engage Parkinson's.

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Why Does Communicating with Patient Groups Matter?

Patient groups hold influencing power in the US market.

Often, patients and their loved ones turn to the internet to self-educate on their illness and how to navigate it best. Many patients are members of advocacy groups in which they discuss their own stories from diagnosis to today.

Why does this matter for your company?

Providing resources and building relationships with patient groups can help you grow your relationships with potential business partners and key opinion leaders in the market. Medical providers often hear about new indications from their patients.

Diagnosed individuals often research on their own and then turn to professionals for confirmation that it is the right path for them. Often, providers are happy to recommend patients for trials (so long as they meet the eligibility) to provide free medical treatment in the expensive, corrupt US healthcare system.

Creating a microsite like [Engage Parkinson's](#) is crucial in enabling this process.

Beyond patients, you should consider the information that multiple industry stakeholders seek. Do more than just target the most prominent players in the market. Drive value like Denali Therapeutics by creating education-oriented assets for numerous target groups.

- Content by the BDMT Global Team

If you are interested in potential partnerships and long-term relationships with the companies mentioned in this article or others in the U.S. and/or S. Korea, contact Suzy at sim@bdmtglobal.com.

Suzy Im



As the head of BDMT Global in Boston, Im focuses on accelerating the innovative transformation of global companies. She is a Professor of Marketing and a member of the Advisory Board at Emerson College. Im is also co-founder of Sponsors of the Future, a non-profit organization that leads corporate social responsibility, promoting neurodiversity and inclusion. As a well-known business developer and marketing strategist in the global field for over 20 years, Im merged the two critical global business functions of Business Development (BD) and Marketing Transformation (MT) for the first time. She was recognized for her innovative business model and contribution and received five consecutive awards in the U.S. including the North American Business Awards and TITAN Business Award 2022 in Biotechnology.

