



SABINSA is dedicated to the principles of tradition, innovation and research and takes on big challenges

A conversation with Shaheen Majeed

Shaheen Majeed has been promoted to President of Sabinsa Worldwide, with responsibility for manufacturing, marketing, strategies and other operational matters. He is actively involved in Sabinsa's extensive cultivation program, interacting with farmers to ensure sustainability of quality raw materials from which Sabinsa manufactures the company's high quality, proprietary ingredients. Shaheen earned a BA in Economics from Rutgers University, NJ and an MBA in Business Management from Keller Management School, CA. In 2009 Natural Foods Merchandiser magazine named him one of 40 under 40 notable members of the industry.

EURO COSMETICS: *You are known for your innovative products uniquely crafted to meet market needs. What was your most groundbreaking product launch?*

Shaheen Majeed: At the turn of the century, major cosmetic companies in USA started looking seriously at some of the most well-known Ayurvedic ingredients, however, the traditional uses scared them off, they anticipated that western consumers may not follow such routines. One example was Turmeric. Traditionally, in India, women and even men, would put turmeric, in an almost paste format, directly on to their face and body, to give them a glow (and for various health benefits as well), especially at the time of marriages. While the indisputable fact of turmeric's antioxidant property was apparent, making a cream with turmeric that lighter skinned individuals could take was a challenge the cosmetic industry faced. Sabinsa had been working on turmeric since the early 1990's, and we managed to understand its principles, activities, and

even its metabolites. In the creation of the first set of metabolites, we produced tetrahydrocurcuminoids, and within this, we isolated just the main component, Tetrahydrocurcumin, standardizing it to 95%, and trademarked as SabiWhite®.

SabiWhite® (INCI: Tetrahydrodiferuloylmethane) is a color-free natural powder ingredient derived from the rhizomes of



Bouquet of Turmeric

Curcuma longa (turmeric). Its clinically proven antioxidant effects along with tyrosine and melanogenesis inhibition potential offer improved skin tone and other major skin benefits, without the color of turmeric. It was the deep understanding of turmeric, right down to its chemistry, along with our biological R&D team that led us to develop such a product. We were not out to create the next new cosmetic ingredient, we were not trying to re-write the chemistry of what nature gave us, but in fact, answering a need to the marketplace, and delivering it in a safe, efficacious format that could be used by all. SabiWhite® remains Sabinsa's cosmetic flagship ingredient in all countries it is sold in.

EURO COSMETICS: *Almost 20 years ago, you developed LactoSpore®, a shelf-stable probiotic. What has happened in development since then and what new insights are there?*

Shaheen Majeed: LactoSpore® (*Bacillus coagulans* MTCC 5856), is a shelf stable

probiotic, producing L(+)-Lactic acid and thus harmful to bad pathogens. Our *Bacillus coagulans* strain has since been assigned the accession number as MTCC 5856. It received a “no comments letter” from US-FDA for its GRAS status. LactoSpore® has also received approval as a “Natural Health Product” in Canada by the NNHPD (Natural and Non-Prescription Health Products Directorate), the regulatory authority in Canada. Previously it was intended only as a digestive aid. However, more recently, Sabinsa studied its multifactorial benefits in terms of its safety¹, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)², IBS co-existing with the major depressive disorder³, adjuvant to weight management and lipid management. It has showed a higher survival rate of 92% following 240 minutes of simulated digestion process which was significantly higher compared to *L. acidophilus* control. It further showed excellent *in-vitro* functional efficacy in simulated gastric survival, mucosal adhesion and immunomodulation⁴. In the functional food segment, LactoSpore® was found to be stable in baked confectionaries⁵ (92% viability in banana muffins and 86% viability in waffles), and highly resistant to tea and coffee brewing compared to other tested probiotic strains⁶. You'll find LactoSpore® used by customers in various dietary supplements, as simple as capsules to delicious gummies and even more so in foods and beverages. One large segment where LactoSpore® has grown is in beverage combinations with Kombucha. Recently, probiotics have gained importance on balancing the skin microbiome. Skin health is connected with the gut-brain-skin axis and is influenced by stress, anxiety, mood, indigestion, imbalanced gut microbiome, blood sugar management, etc. LactoSpore® helps to maintain the gut microbiome and hence indirectly protects and nurtures the skin.

EURO COSMETICS: *In the cosmeceuticals sector, you are pursuing sustainable research and you offer a wide range of products. Which are the most successful products and what else can we expect in this sector?*

Shaheen Majeed: Sabinsa is well versed in promoting its actives for cosmeceutical sector through skin toning, anti-aging, acne protection, antimicrobial, foot care



Shaheen Majeed interacts with scientists at the corporate R&D center in Bangalore, India

etc. SabiWhite® (INCI: Tetrahydrodiferuloylmethane) for depigmentation⁷, Centellin® CG (INCI: Centella Asiatica Extract) for wound healing and foot care⁸ and Plicosanol (INCI: Saccharum Officinarum (Sugarcane) Extract) for sebum control⁹ are the most successful ingredients with clinical substantiation. Other actives are PteroWhite® for depigmentation, Cococin™ as a hair growth promoter, and Sage Extract for anti-aging/anti-wrinkle. The upcoming products in this segment are Olepent® (INCI: Oleanoyl sh-Pentapeptide-4) a unique patented pentapeptide (collagen booster) attached with Oleanolic acid (helps maintain skin structural integrity) that has a potential use in anti-aging formulations, due to its skin firming and repairing peptide activities.

The next one to look for is LactoSporin® (INCI: Bacillus Ferment Filtrate Extract), a probiotic metabolite preparation obtained from the patented probiotic strain *B. coagulans* MTCC 5856 via patented technology in a defined growth media. The *in vitro* studies proved that LactoSporin® is potent antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-collagenase and has UV protection potential. Hence, it has capable uses in anti-aging formulations. More recent studies shows it also plays an important role in hair care formulations.

EURO COSMETICS: *You have been very successful on the market with your “beauty*

from inside” concept. What precisely is the idea behind this?

Shaheen Majeed: The beauty from inside out concept is well known in Ayurveda – The Indian Traditional System of Ayurvedic medicine. According to Ayurveda, the beauty concept starts from the mother's womb and it is believed that toxic materials inside the body make a person ugly and may cause abnormal growth. Hence purification (Shodhana) is the best practice to eliminate body toxins¹⁰. Recent studies have proved that visible skin aging is common in people with highly diabetic condition. The rate of urination is increased in diabetic condition, which leads to dry

- 1 Majeed et al., 2016. *J Clin Toxicol.* 6(1):1–9
- 2 Majeed et al., 2016. *Nutr J.* 2016; DOI: 10.1186/s12937-016-0140-6
- 3 Majeed et al., 2018 *Food Nutr Res.* 4:62. doi: 10.29219/fnr.v62.1218
- 4 Sindi et al., 2019. *J Funct Foods.* 52: 100-108
- 5 Majeed et al., 2016. *Int J Food Sci Technol.* 51:894–901
- 6 Majeed et al., 2018. *Food Res Int.* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2018.12.003>
- 7 Majeed et al., 2010. *Household and Personal Care TODAY.* 44–66
- 8 Majeed et al., 2016. *World J Pharm Pharmaceutical Sci.* 5(12): 983–994
- 9 Majeed et al., 2016. *EJBPS.* 3(10): 462–466
- 10 Hazra and Panda. 2013. *J Clin Exp Dermatol Res.* 4(3). DOI: 10.4172/2155-9554.1000178

skin. The sugar molecules in the skin bound to a protein or lipid molecule without controlling the action of an enzyme, ultimately leading to the formation of highly reactive Advanced Glycation End products (AGEs). These end products are responsible for the weakening of collagen and elastin fibers regeneration ability, which is associated with visible skin aging: wrinkling, sagging and looseness¹¹. Some of the Sabinsa active ingredients to support the re-emerging concept of beauty from within are Saberry®, Curcumin C3 Reduct®, Silbino®, Artonox® and so on. Several significant studies are underway to further enhance our understanding in this area. It's a concept that is quickly becoming reality and we believe our science will carry it forward to both marketing companies and customers alike.

EURO COSMETICS: *How do you address the many and varied requirements of manufacturers in the personal care sector?*

Shaheen Majeed: The demand for innovative products, formulas, dosage forms, and supporting studies for their claim substantiation are increased by the manufacturers to get the maximum share in the personal care marketplace. At Sabinsa, we evaluate the safety and efficacy not only in the ingredient stage but also in the finished formulations. This research not only gives the manufacturer confidence to buy our actives, but also accelerates their time to market, which can mean everything in this highly competitive and innovative sector. Taking skin care actives to the next level, Sabinsa also launched a unique concept of blends, D'Cosmix®, with innovative, patented ingredients and a focused approach in dealing with a variety of skin conditions¹². These blends can be directly incorporated in various skin care formulations. Some of the blends are evaluated for their efficacy by an independent agency. A study using MelaLiteDC_x 1% cream has reported a significant improvement in skin complexion and reduction of dark spots. DerMoist DC_x is a moisturizing blend composed of effective nutrients to keep the



Dr. Muhammed Majeed meeting with farmers for an upcoming Turmeric harvest

skin moisturized, nourished and healthy. A study using DerMoist DC_x 3% cream showed significant improvement in hydration of skin.

While we are at heart an ingredients company, we look at ourselves experimenting with finished formulations, to know for sure it is a product we would buy. Therefore, when you visit our R&D HQ in Bangalore, India, you'll see various laboratories, one in particular is the cosmetic lab where we create very unique finished cosmetic products for further testing, sometimes we're making sample formulations for our customers – and often times, those come to market from our concepts ... that's exciting!

EURO COSMETICS: *Last year, the Nutrition Business Journal awarded Sabinsa the prize for Supply Chain Transparency and Sustainability. What precisely does this prize represent?*

Shaheen Majeed: We have committed to fund a 10-year reforestation project that will oversee the plantation of more than 166,600 *Pterocarpus marsupium* (Indian Kino) saplings on 250 acres land in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. The cultivation is managed by the reforestation organization – Madhya Pradesh Rajya Van Vikas Nigam Limited on land provided by the Forest Department of the state of Madhya Pradesh. The group expects to spend about \$500,000 on this project, which is the first initiative to conserve this high-value, multipurpose, threatened species in India. The project earned the NutraIngredients-USA Editors Award for Industry Initiative of the Year

for 2018. Sabinsa's proprietary extracts obtained from *Pterocarpus marsupium*, and based upon licensed patents, are sold under the brand names, Silbino®, PteroWhite® and pTeroSol®.

Nutrition Business Journal honored Sabinsa with supply chain transparency/Sustainability award for its extensive cultivation program. We are involved in training of farmers through the years for fine-tuning of the program, providing seed to the farmers, training them to grow herbs sustainably and cleanly, a guaranteed buy back policy with a minimum purchase price in case of a bad crop. When the price goes up for the raw materials, Sabinsa pays higher rate than the contracted amount. They are taught for techniques like naturally repel of pests, cultivation training, monitoring bi-weekly by our trained and skilled scientists/botanists, irrigation support in case of drought condition, etc.

In both acceptance speeches, I made it clear that we did not do these things for any awards, we did it because it was the right thing to do. The idea to do re-forestation came from a deep understanding of the impact we would make if we were to simply take from Mother Nature and not give back, the next generation would experience an extinct species – but we can do something about it now, and so we took action. The sustainability and farming aspect, honestly, it's an endeavor that Dr. Majeed (founder & Chairman of the Sami-Sabinsa Group) passionately started and continues to do so, for the past 15+ years, so it's like second nature to all of us here. We appreciate the industry taking notice on both of these initiatives, yet there

¹¹ Sadowska-Bartosz and Bartosz. 2015. *Molecules* 20: 3309–3334

¹² Majeed and Vaidyanathan. 2016. *Softjournal*. 6–12

are many more initiatives we are tackling, because it's the right thing to do.

EURO COSMETICS: *What role does transparency of the supply chain play at your company and what are the challenges here?*

Shaheen Majeed: Our supply chain motion starts from purchase of starting raw materials either from our own farmers, contract farmers or approved vendors. The approved vendors are qualified by our experts through onsite audit and routine checks. The raw material undergoes various stages of manufacturing and packaging, we make sure that no bonded labors and labors below 18 are involved during the whole process. While we mainly depend on the third-party shipment for the transport of material from our warehouse to the destination, they too are audited and checked. For us, each and every step is important, as it should be in our industry among our peers, be it competitors or other suppliers in other segments. You must be "in the know", you cannot be blindsided or rather foolish enough not to check, those things will come back to haunt you. This may be the reason Sabinsa has become obsessive on all fronts, such as controlling where we get our material, how it enters our facility, how we handle it throughout our facility, what process controls we have in place for manufacturing the material to the desired specification and how it leaves us – yet, believe it or not, this obsession helps us sleep better at night!

EURO COSMETICS: *Last year, you celebrated your company's 30th anniversary.*

When you look back, what were the important milestones?

Shaheen Majeed: It was a serious time of reflection; I look back to the incredible number of ingredient innovations that Sabinsa has brought to the marketplace. The untold number of entrepreneurs that Dr. Majeed inspired to enter this business, be it herbal extracts, cosmeceuticals or even the flavors and fragrance marketplace. Sometimes it was lonely, for example, we stood alone in our patent fights, misunderstood in the beginning, where sometimes media and companies portrayed us as bullying, but in fact, we were standing up so that the industry would not fall. We fought the battles that the next new companies would not have to. We were ensuring best practices for our industry, telling people that borrowing of science is illegitimate, and companies must respect intellectual properties. As a private company, we didn't have shareholders or stocks to pay for lawsuits, it came from these pockets, so it was with a profound understanding of the matter we proceeded. When our crops failed one year, it was devastating, but we didn't pack up and go home, we risked it all over again, yet this time, we spread out, we learned and moved on. We took more farmers under our wings and built a farming model that generations can follow. We built factory after factory to not only ensure supply, but supply with a cGMP mindset, and to that effort, we put internationally recognized audit firms to encourage that discipline. Yet, in my conversations with Dr. Majeed, the major milestones are our people. Some have been with us 20 plus years. In any of my tours, as you walk around with me, be

it in Utah, USA, or Bangalore, India, to even our office in Japan, I'm proud to point out the people who walk next to me as someone with so many years of experience in our organization. This is a milestone we are very proud of.

EURO COSMETICS: *And what can you tell us with respect to the future?*

Shaheen Majeed: We continue to work on special short peptides, in the area of anti-aging because they are highly effective and can be utilized in most premium skin care products. OlePent® is one example of this which we are launching now, it's a patented skin firming and repairing peptide.

On the nutraceutical side, plant-based protein (Promond®) containing formulations can also be an added advantage in the near future. Lots of work going on in the prebiotic category, and we're able to couple that with our probiotic LactoSpore® for customers who are looking for synbiotics.

EURO COSMETICS: *What projects will Sabinsa undertake this year?*

Shaheen Majeed: Sabinsa will be bringing back Sabinsa on Wheels, the scientific touring program that capitulated Sabinsa's awareness and sales, dating back to the 90's. This year, we will focus on four locations in the United States and next year bring it to various international areas, such as Canada, Europe, Japan, Australia, etc. Building up our office in South Africa, China and Australia will take more prominence in my personal agenda. They are some great markets, and while we are established there with our own offices, I'm looking forward to spending more time in those areas and seeing what more we can achieve.

EURO COSMETICS: *What special features/items will you present at in-cosmetics in Paris this year?*

Shaheen Majeed: This year at in-cosmetics, Paris, we will showcase Olepent® and LactoSporin®, along with our beauty from within concept ingredients. It's going to be a great year, with lots of science and validation of our efforts.

EURO COSMETICS: *Thank you very much for the conversation.*

