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PRESS RELEASES

UK SCIENTISTS IN SOUTH INDIA 18-22 FEBRUARY 2008 (18/02/08)

Collaboration and commercialisation to advance drug discovery, clinical trials, stem cell technology and regenerative medicine

A team of scientists and experts from the UK will be in South India from 18 to 22 February 2008 to meet R&D and private sector institutions and highlight UK expertise in life sciences. The team will also showcase the UK as an investment destination for hi-tech R&D and explore opportunities for collaboration and commercialisation of stem cell technology. The visits to Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad are part of a wider mission to Asia that includes Korea and Japan, and is aimed at strengthening technology relationships between Asia and the UK.

The team of scientists visiting South India includes Dr. Tony Jones, Director of Biotechnology & Healthcare London First and Prof. Desmond G Johnston, Professor of Clinical Endocrinology, Imperial College who will be looking specifically at drug discovery and clinical trials. The team also includes Prof Colin McGuckin and Dr. Nico Forraz from the Newcastle Centre for Cord Blood International Centre for Life who will be looking specifically at regenerative medicine and stem cells.


Prof. McGuckin said, "Stem cell technology can reduce pharmaceutical R&D by 25% each year with savings of up to US\$ 225 million in each drug market. Our commercialisation strategy includes the production of functional 3D human liver tissue models by combining umbilical cord blood stem cells to bio-materials and growth factors. Normal liver tissue models are one of the most wanted predictive toxicology tools in the drug discovery world. Our technology for pharma pre-clinical testing will help better prediction of human adverse reactions early in R&D and reduce animal testing."

The liver is the primary organ for drug metabolism/detoxification and for drug-induced toxicity. Drug-induced toxicity to the liver is the major cause of drug failures (75% adverse drug reactions result in liver transplantation and/or death).

In South India the scientists will meet a range of institutions to explore opportunities for collaboration. These include NCBS, IISc and Manipal Institute of Regenerative Medicine in Bangalore and Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology in Hyderabad. In Chennai the team will meet LifeCell, Jeevan Blood Bank and Nichi-In Centre for Regenerative Medicine and a number of other contacts in the sector.

Mr Mike Connor, British Deputy High Commissioner in Southern India said, "Pharma-biotech collaborations today include early-state drug deals as well as products closer to commercialisation. The UK is known globally for the strong and mutually beneficial partnerships that exist between the R&D and business communities. I am therefore delighted that the UK team is coming to South India and hope that institutions here will work with them to build mutually beneficial partnerships."

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 [Indo-UK Round Table Programme \(DOC, 21.0KB\)](#)

 [UK Lifescience and R&D: Key Facts \(DOC, 23.5KB\)](#)

 [Driving Innovation Through To Market Success \(PDF, 1.93MB\)](#)

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

- * Companies or R&D institutions in South India interested in meeting the team are requested to contact the nearest UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) office in Chennai, Bangalore or Hyderabad. Log on to www.ukinindia.com
- * The Indian life science community has developed a strong and growing relationship with biotech centres of excellence in the UK. These include Avesthagen, the National Centre for Biological Sciences and Edutech from Bangalore, Clintox Biosciences, Shantha Biotechnics and Ocimum Biosolutions in Hyderabad.
- * The Institute of Clinical Research in Mumbai now offers a two-year M.Sc from Cranfield University, UK and the Serum Institute in Pune uses development technologies from Lipoxen, UK to manufacture vaccines more efficiently. Dabur Pharma Ltd has invested around £20 million in the UK to make cancer therapy more widely available.
- * Panacea Biotech, India's second largest vaccine producer, has recently teamed up with Cambridge Biostability, a temperature-stable vaccines specialist, in a £1.9 million joint venture. The partnership aims to start clinical trials soon, giving more children access to life-saving vaccines.
- * The UK is a world leader in stem-cell research and in the regulation of the use of embryonic stem cells. Scientific research funding in the UK is expected to be around £3.4 billion in 2007-08.
- * The UK accounts for over 10% of global Life Sciences R&D funding despite accounting for less than 1% of the world's population. UK firms have developed 40% of biotech products in late-stage clinical trials in Europe and 45% of Europe's public biotech companies are located in the UK.

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