

Fostering collaboration

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2nd BioSpectrum Asia Pacific BioScience Forum

The second edition of BioSpectrum Asia Pacific BioSciences Forum, held in Singapore on March 16, 2012, brought together key members of the biosciences industry in APAC, including researchers, entrepreneurs, investors and government representatives and gave them an opportunity to share their views on the platform. The theme was “Fostering Collaborations in Asia BioSciences Industry”.

This was the second year when BioSpectrum Asia successfully organized a neutral forum for Asian leaders of the industry. BioSpectrum Group Editor Mr Abraham Mathew gave the keynote address. He spoke about how unlike the pharmaceutical market of North America and Western Europe, the emerging markets of Asia are characterized by diverse therapeutic segments, different and complex regulatory laws and a fragmented market.

He noted that according to Frost & Sullivan, the Asia Pacific healthcare market in 2011 was estimated to make up 28.5 percent of the global healthcare market and will grow to 34.6 percent by 2015. “We could claim a shift in power in the pharmaceutical markets of the world, away from the major developed powers of the US, Canada, Western Europe and Japan, to a set of new, dynamic and fast-growing emerging economies of China, Brazil, India, Mexico, Russia, South East Asia, South Korea and Turkey. This will create a new set of dynamics,” said Mr Mathew.

The forum saw participation of eminent industry leaders from the Asia Pacific region, such Ms Cheryl McCaffery, deputy director, A*Star, who shared her thoughts on “Collaborations and factors to help ensure success to Asian companies”. “In order to reduce development time of technology or assays and to look for possible leads, MNCs are seeking collaboration in emerging market. Industry partners facilitate knowledge exchange between scientists in research

organization and help researchers learn to apply their technology in the real industry," she said.

Mr Victor Skladnev, CEO, AIMEDICS, Australia, shared the success story of their product HypoMon and its journey from a university spinout to a successful commercial product. Mr Peeyush Jain, deputy managing director, Venus Remedies, India, showcased the way innovation has driven the company to attain global footprints.

Mr Joshua Funder, director, Spinifex Pharmaceuticals, Australia; Mr Matthijs van Leeuwen, co-founder & COO, Simugen, Malaysia; Dr Noel Moore, CEO, HistoIndex, Singapore; and Mr Mallikarjun Sundaram, CEO, Mitra Biotech, India, participated in a panel discussion on 'Fostering Asia-Asia collaboration'. Dr Funder moderated the discussion and said venture capitalists can play a key role in improving collaborations in Asia. Dr Moore added that one of the challenges that young companies face is ensuring return of investment at the starting days. Collaboration at an initial stage not only helps to cut cost but also to share the risk, he pointed out.

Mr Leeuwen added that the governments, pharmaceutical companies and biotechnology companies can play an instrumental role in providing development path to young companies. Mr Sundaram said companies should look at bringing in innovation in their product, so that the chances of establishing potential partnership and eventually bringing profitability increase.

Dr Wilber Huang, president and CEO of Abnova, Taiwan, and Dr BG Rhee, president, Green Cross, South Korea, showcased their successful stories of building core competencies that allowed them to give tough competition to global players. Dr Jane Tsai, deputy director general, Industrial Technology Research Institute, Taiwan, talked about the opportunities in Taiwan and the window it opens for the giant China market.

Amrita Tejasvi in Singapore