

Clinical research is the buzzword

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If you are a life science graduate looking for a challenging and rewarding career, one in the field of clinical research should be your first choice. We tell you why...

India is increasingly being recognized as a quality player and a preferred partner for global clinical trials. This can be further attributed to a large and diverse patients' pool, availability of medical, pharmacy and science graduates, excellent infrastructure facilities, comparative cost advantage and changes in the regulatory framework.

A promising industry

According to McKinsey Report, the global clinical trial outsourcing to India in the pharmaceutical industry is estimated to reach around Rs 5,000 crore by the year 2010, and there will be requirement of approximately 50,000 clinical research professionals.

Analysts are already projecting that the total clinical research spending in India will increase by more than 30 percent annually through 2010. A study by Ernst & Young indicates that the total market value of clinical research activities performed in India is expected to grow to around \$1.5-2 billion. Many pharmaceutical and clinical research organizations have already come forward to unlock the vast potential that India has, and are conducting clinical trials in India. Thus, there is expected to be a huge demand for qualified and trained clinical research professionals.

Courses for student

The Institute of Clinical Research (India), ICRI offers various programs in clinical research. This includes a two-year MSc in clinical research program in Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Bangalore. The course with its exhaustive syllabus elaborates on the essential aspects of clinical research. Students can choose to complete their course at the Cranfield University, UK. A Postgraduate Diploma in Pharmaceutical Management (PGDPM) is integrated into the program that provides strong functional skills and the ability to integrate and apply them in different management settings. The degree is awarded by Cranfield University UK and is not recognized by AICTE/UGC or any other State Act. Besides this, the institute also conducts 1 year part time PG diploma courses in clinical data management and clinical research.

Career prospects

There are various stages in the making of a clinical trial and hence one can look forward to a range of careers in the field. One might work as a project manager, a data manager, an investigator or oversee the business development in major pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, CROs and biotech companies. ICRI students have had almost 100 percent placements in most of the renowned pharmaceutical companies including Siro-Clinpharm, Cipla, Cognizant, Pfizer, IRL-Synexus, Clinirx, iGATE, Quintiles and Ranbaxy to name a few.

Remuneration

As in any other career, salary packages are based on individual merit, a student's academic background and a rising learning curve. Salaries start at Rs 1.5 lakh per annum to over Rs 15 lakh per annum for professionals with less than five years experience. Clinical Research, therefore, promises to be an interesting career option in India. At ICRI, the average salaries have been Rs 1,80,000 pa and it is anticipated that this year's average will be double based on the demand-supply gap existing in the industry.