

DBT, UK join hands to launch joint partnerships

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The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and the Medical Research Council (MRC), UK have announced the launch of Joint Center Partnerships, which seek to build upon substantial pre-existing collaborations between high quality research teams based in the UK and India.

This joint initiative aims to encourage and strengthen UK-India research partnerships, and to support the mobility and exchange of MRC. It will also help DBT-funded researchers to enhance established links between researchers in both the countries.

One of the major areas of thrust in this joint project would be cancer biology. This includes understanding the basic biological mechanisms relevant to the etiology of cancer or mechanisms involved in cancer metastases. It also includes development of novel therapeutics, including chemical biology approaches for drug discovery.

Another area of focus will be translational regenerative medicine in neuroscience which will be aimed at translating promising research into clinical trials. In this area, focus will be on regenerative medical research approaches to neuroscience or neurological disorders which have the specific aim of turning fundamental discoveries into improvements in human health. This would be by targeting pre-clinical and clinical development to human proof-of-concept studies.

The other area of focus is antimicrobial resistance, especially antibiotic resistance as there is a rise in the number of bacteria becoming resistant to existing antibiotics without an increase in new antibiotics or new treatments. It is clear that an interdisciplinary approach is needed to tackle these challenges and make a change in addressing this growing global problem. Collaboration between the UK and India will facilitate sharing information, tools, compound libraries, datasets, and screens to acquire new insights into the emergence and spread of antibiotic resistant bacteria, the evolution of resistance and to drive the discovery of new diagnostic, preventative and therapeutic strategies for bacterial infections particularly antibiotic resistant strains.

The centers will be jointly funded by the MRC and DBT. Each center should develop one node in the UK and one node in India. Although funding will be made available to expand upon and enhance current funded research activities, this call is primarily focused upon developing and enhancing research partnerships.