

Celebrating product developments

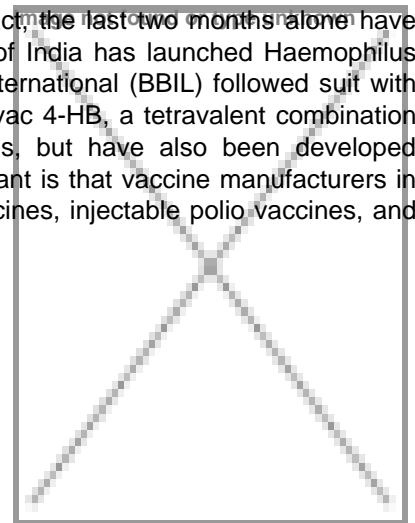
05 October 2007 | News

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With each passing day the Indian biotech industry is getting all the more exciting. In fact, the last two months alone have witnessed several product launches. India's leading biotech company, Serum Institute of India has launched Haemophilus influenza type b conjugate vaccine-HibPRO-in India. Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International (BBIL) followed suit with its version, Haemophilus Influenza Type b (Hib)-BioHib-vaccine. It also introduced Comvac 4-HB, a tetravalent combination vaccine. These vaccines are not only affordable alternatives to the existing vaccines, but have also been developed indigenously. Though this is just an indicator of the things to come, what is more important is that vaccine manufacturers in India are working overtime to develop and launch several vaccines like pentavalent vaccines, injectable polio vaccines, and rotavirus vaccines.



Another major development has been the launch of macro diagnostic chips by Bangalore-based Xcyton Diagnostics. Xcyton, no doubt, has taken the lead in pioneering the development of DNA macro-chips in the country. This chip, according to the scientists involved in the development, will allow simultaneous investigation of multiple infections instead of sequentially diagnosing infections and is a platform combining the nucleic acid amplification and genomics-based DNA macro-array. A very important feature of this development is that this platform has been the outcome of public-private institution partnership. The company developed a Vision chip in collaboration with institutes like AIIMS, Sankara Netralaya, LV Prasad Eye Institute, and Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB). Its HPV chip was developed in association with Rajiv Gandhi Center for Biotechnology (RGCB), ACTREC, Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, and CCMB. The product was under the aegis of CSIR initiated New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI).

While the products being developed by Indian companies are on the rise, so is the commitment of global companies in India. Again this month one saw some major announcements being made by the top executives of global majors. PerkinElmer announced that it is strengthening its India presence and Waters Corporation has inked a unique pact. There is an underlying message besides these companies seeing India as a high growth market. The message is to bring out innovative products. For instance, PerkinElmer has announced a project with the Indian government (Indian Council for Medical Research) for genetic screening. Waters Corporation has tied up with Lambda Therapeutic Research, an Indian CRO company to understand the challenges of the CRO companies and come up with solutions like they did in getting their market leading Ultra Performance Liquid Chromatography (UPLC) technology a few years back.

Recently, GE Healthcare, a healthcare and life sciences solutions unit of GE, organized a summit to champion the cause of "early health" in India. It discussed the medical and economic benefits of evolving medicine and patient care from treating symptomatic "late-stage" disease to a focus on early pre-symptomatic detection and intervention. It is a revelation that GE has developed several products and is collaborating with many organizations to bring about a paradigm shift in the way healthcare is managed in India.

All these developments call for celebrations of scientific development and awareness.

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