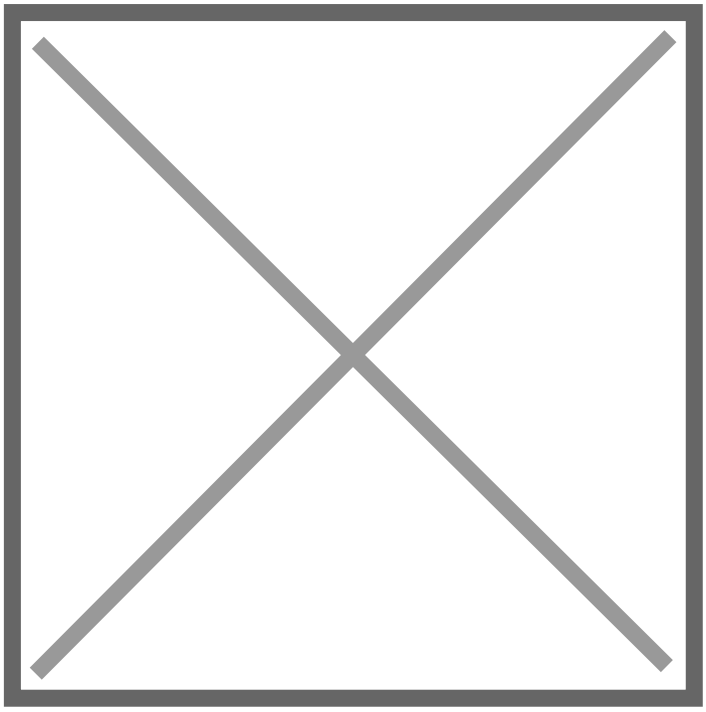
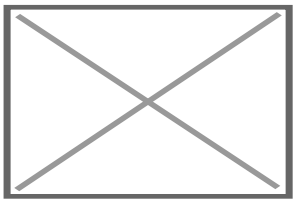
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Avesthagen to identify novel genetic info

07 October 2010 | News





Avesthagen, a leading integrated systems biology platform company, has initiated Avestagenome Project sequencing, a set of 60 closely related human genomes to identify novel genetic information relevant to cancer, metabolic and neurological disorders.

Through this project, Avesthagen intends to establish a direct link between genes, genetics and the disorders. It is known that many genes on the human chromosomes may be involved during the manifestation of the above disorders. However, the power of present technologies to discover the causative genes of such disorders is limited. Sequencing the 60 genomes for different disorders will be groundbreaking, as analysis of the mammoth 10 tera bytes of data generated, will enable scientists to discover novel causative genes on the chromosomes which may be indicative of occurrence of cancer, metabolic and neurological disorders.

Once completed, there will be a better understanding of the genetics underlying the diseases. The study will help in identifying new and better drugs, specific for the above mentioned disorders. The discovery will lead to identifying bio molecules for the accurate prediction of the disease manifestation.

This study is being carried out in partnership with Genome Enterprise, a subsidiary of The Genome Analysis Center (TGAC), Norwich Research Park, UK. The TGAC team, specialists in DNA sequencing and bioinformatics, will use Life Technologies' SOLiD 4 sequencing platform, and will collaborate with the Avesthagen's own bioinformatics experts to analyze and interpret the sequence data.

Biocon, CIM in JV for immunology research

Biocon, a premier biotech company in India, and the Center of Molecular Immunology (CIM), based in Havana, Cuba, have strengthened their existing research partnership by joining forces for an integrated antibody program in immunology. Both entities have successfully collaborated for almost a decade, on an integrated program to manufacture and clinically evaluate recombinant proteins, with the aim of building a portfolio, based on therapeutic biotechnology products for chronic diseases. Two drugs have already been approved for medical use in India and other territories. A novel monoclonal antibody targeting the Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor for the treatment of cancer, and the human recombinant Erythropoietin, for the control of anemia in chronic kidney diseases were developed under stringent medical regulatory standards.

Focusing to build on this successful partnership, Biocon and CIM are moving to create an innovative product pipeline, focused on autoimmune diseases and cancer. Fundamental research performed at CIM and Biocon, has defined the anti-inflammatory capacity of a novel monoclonal antibody, an Anti-CD6 Monoclonal Antibody. This molecule targets lymphocytes, the key players in the immunopathology of autoimmune diseases. Experimental data supports its effect in controlling inflammation, that can cause damage to tissues. The research results have been endorsed by scientific journals, and discussed in international congresses.
Ã¢â?¬Å?This Anti-CD6 targeting antibody is a first-in-class molecule, that has recently transited to advanced clinical trials, for

the treatment of psoriasis and rheumatoid arthritis patients,Ã¢â?¬? said Dr Kiran Majumdar-Shaw, chairman & managing director of Biocon.

DCVMN develops life saving vaccines

Bharat Biotech, Hyderabad-based biotechnology major focusing on vaccines, biopharmaceuticals and contract research hosted a four-day Annual General Meet of
Developing Countries Vaccine Manufactures Network (DCVMN) from Sep 13-16, 2010. Over 125 participants from 31 vaccine manufacturers, representing 14 countries and 12 international agencies, participated in this year's annual meet.

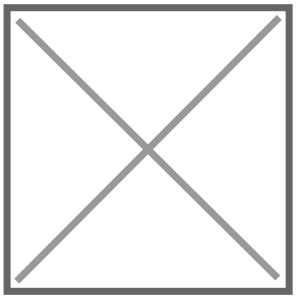
Dr Akira Homma, president of DCVMN, said, Ã¢â?¬Å?DCVMN provides two-third of the vaccines used in the world. The DCVMN is an important partner in the
Global Immunization Agenda, as its goals are aligned to Global Alliance for Vaccine Immunization (GAVI).Ã¢â?¬?

Swine flu casualties continue in India

With the monsoon active in India, there has been no decrease in the casualties from H1N1 influenza virus attack. According to Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the lab confirmed cases reported during the week of Sep 6-12, 2010 were 1,011; with 75 deaths reported during the same period. All 1,011 cases reported during the week were indigenous cases.

Out of the 75 deaths reported, Maharashtra has the most victims, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. The casualties of swine flu include 22 deaths reported from Maharashtra, 18 from Madhya Pradesh and 15 from Gujarat. Till date, the samples from 177,816 persons have been tested for influenza.

'India BT Industry to reach 36,107 cr by 2015'



According to the knowledge report released jointly by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and Yes Bank, the Indian biotechnology industry would grow at a CAGR of 20 percent to achieve a market size of 36,107 crore ($8 billion) by 2015.
The report titled 'India Life Sciences: Vision 2015' has attributed the growth to various new developments in the industry, including the launch of numerous initiatives to lend support to the industry by the the union and state governments. While highlighting the rapidly growing market in India, the report has also estimated that India will capture roughly three-to-five percent of the global biopharmaceuticals market by 2015.

Indian biotechnology companies have been steadily receiving large orders for combination vaccines from the Central Government, under its numerous immunization initiatives. The demand for specific conjugates in the pediatric and adolescent segment, is also stimulating growth of the market. Breakthrough products, such as Shanchol Ã¢â?¬â?? the bivalent oral vaccine, jointly developed by Shantha Biotech and International Vaccine Institute, will further boost demand.

The report says that the global biotechnology industry is undergoing transition, creating enabling factors that can aid the growth of the Indian biotechnology industry. It suggests that India can play a key role in reducing cost and time-to-market, for new drug development through outsourcingÂ various components of the drug development process. There is an opportunity for research and development (R&D) focused Indian biotechnology companies to enter into such alliances, through collaborative development projects.

Netherlands signs MoU with TERI

A 15-member delegation from the Utrecht province of the Netherlands, led by The Queen's Commissioner, R Robbertsen, visited India recently, with a mission to explore academics and business cooperation between the Utrecht regions and the Indian counterparts.

On Sep 13, 2010, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Utrecht province and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in India, to initiate their European office in Utrecht.

Under the existing MoU between the Netherlands and India, Indian private partners can participate in public-private partnerships; and in a way that opportunities can be explored, both for Indian companies in the Netherlands and Dutch companies in India. The areas covered under scientific and industrial collaboration include biomass conversion, energy efficiency, water and sustainable cities.

India, Brazil discuss ethanol production

India and Brazil are exploring the possibilities of cooperation in production of ethanol and investment in agriculture. A 13-member delegation led by Sharad Pawar, minister of Agriculture, Consumer affairs, Food and Public distribution, Government

of India, visited Brazil; and had a bilateral meeting with Wagner Rossi, minister for agriculture, livestock and food supply of Brazil.

The delegation met with the officials of the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture in Sao Paulo on Sep 8, 2010, and the directors of UNICA (Brazilian Sugarcane Industry Association), who made a presentation on the Brazilian sugar and ethanol industry.

Medical devices cluster in AP

Andhra Pradesh has plans to set up the country's first MedTech Valley, a world-class cluster for manufacturing medical devices and diagnostic equipment near Genome Valley at Shameerpet, in Hyderabad.

The state government will provide 1,200 acres of land for the project. In phase I, 200 acres are being developed by the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority. The project will be executed via a public-private partnership model, and will get assistance from the central government for infrastructure development.
This cluster is expected to attract global investors in manufacturing of medical devices and equipments; and would provide world-class infrastructure.