BioSpectrum the business of Bio & Health Sciences

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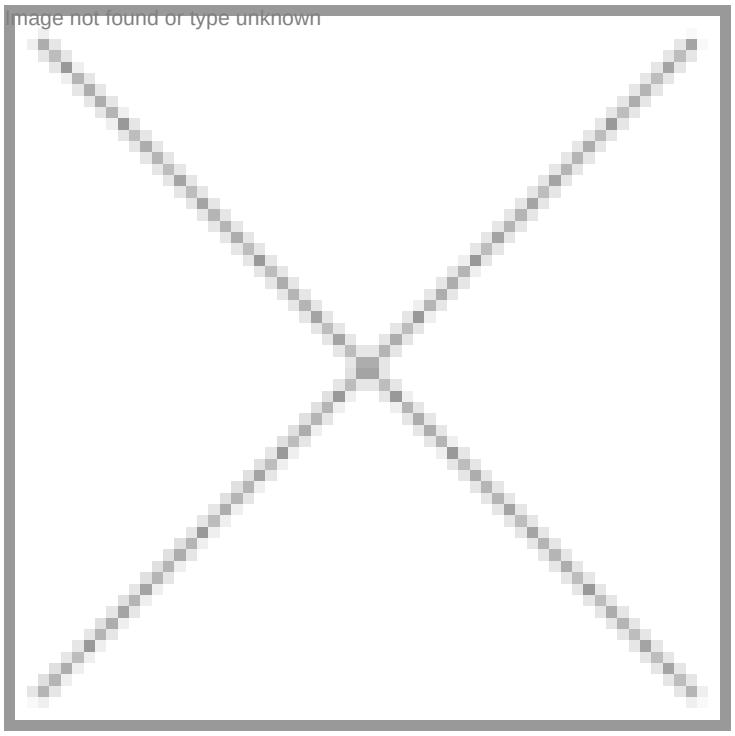

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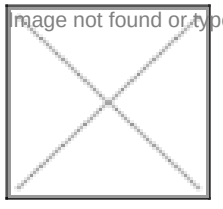
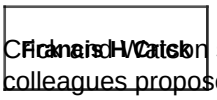
If the year 2003 marked the golden anniversary of the discovery of DNA structure, then 2004 will be remembered for the loss of its co discoverer, Nobel Laureate, Francis Harry Compton Crick. He died on the July 28 this year after a long battle with colon cancer in San Diego, USA.

British-born Francis H Crick along with James D Watson shared the Nobel Prize in 1962 for their work on DNA structure. The duo discovered the spiral double helical structure of DNA in 1953, while working in the Cavendish laboratory in Cambridge, England. By describing its double-helix structure, Watson and Crick solved the question of how DNA, through self-replication, can pass on genetic information to subsequent generations. This achievement almost single handedly revolutionized 20th-century biology and opened the door to a modern era of genetics, medicine and biotechnology.





Crick and Watson subsequently suggested a general theory for the structure of small viruses. Later Crick in collaboration with colleagues proposed structures for polyglycine II, collagen and a structure for polyadenylic acid. In recent years, he concentrated more on biochemistry and genetics leading to ideas about protein synthesis and the genetic code.

Francis H Crick was born in 1916 at Northampton, England. He studied physics at University College but later gravitated towards biological sciences. Interestingly, till 1947 Crick knew hardly any biology, organic chemistry or crystallography, so that much of his next few years were spent in learning the basics of these subjects. Later, in 1954, he obtained a PhD on a thesis entitled "X-ray diffraction: polypeptides and proteins".

Described as one of the most brilliant and influential scientists of all time, Crick became a fellow of the Royal Society in 1959, primarily for his work on DNA, but also for his study of the structure of proteins and viruses. Since 1977, he had been living in America and working at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, pursuing a new goal-to understand the nature of human consciousness.

Biocon posts insulin trial data on website

Biotech industry leader Biocon has decided to make available the clinical trial data of its three new insulin formulations on its website, www.biocon.com with immediate effect.

On July 14, 2004, Biocon had received the clearance from the regulator, the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) for its three insulin formulations: regular, NPH and biphasic isophane.

This unique effort of sharing clinical trial data online makes Biocon the first Indian company to do so and is in keeping with the high standards of corporate governance upheld by the company.

"While this practice is not mandatory, Biocon has taken this initiative in an effort to reiterate our principles of corporate governance both in spirit and practice. This step further emphasizes our core policy of transparency-capturing the ethos that constitutes the true essence of Biocon. This is one amongst the many firsts that the company has set out to achieve, " commented Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, chairman and managing director, Biocon Limited.

Biocon has created an online database to pool information from various clinical studies conducted by the company and will provide summaries of trial protocols and corresponding results. Clinical trial data will be posted on an independent section of the corporate website. Visitors can read comprehensive summaries of clinical trial protocols, peruse testing results and even see references to medical journals (as applicable) where the studies have appeared. The online posting of clinical trial data is to provide relevant information to both physicians and the general public.

Ocimum licenses Genchek to US universities

Ocimum Biosolutions, a leading provider of cutting-edge bioinformatics solutions and Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) has announced that it has licensed GenchekTM, its comprehensive sequence analysis tool to University of Washington, University of Virginia, Alcorn State University and Acuity Pharmaceuticals.

Ocimum's CEO Anuradha Acharya remarked, "GenchekT is our first and most mature product with almost 4 years of development work. The new version of Genchek is very comprehensive and can replace multiple tools used by researchers. We are proud to add these prestigious organizations to our list of clients. Sequence analysis is a cornerstone of modern molecular genetics, yet it is difficult to provide researchers with an experience that is meaningful and cost effective. GenchekT, a comprehensive, multi-platform, cost-effective, sequence analysis software package is capable of handling and analyzing high throughput biological data. We expect that GenchekTM will enhance their research work".

Financial details of the deals were not disclosed.