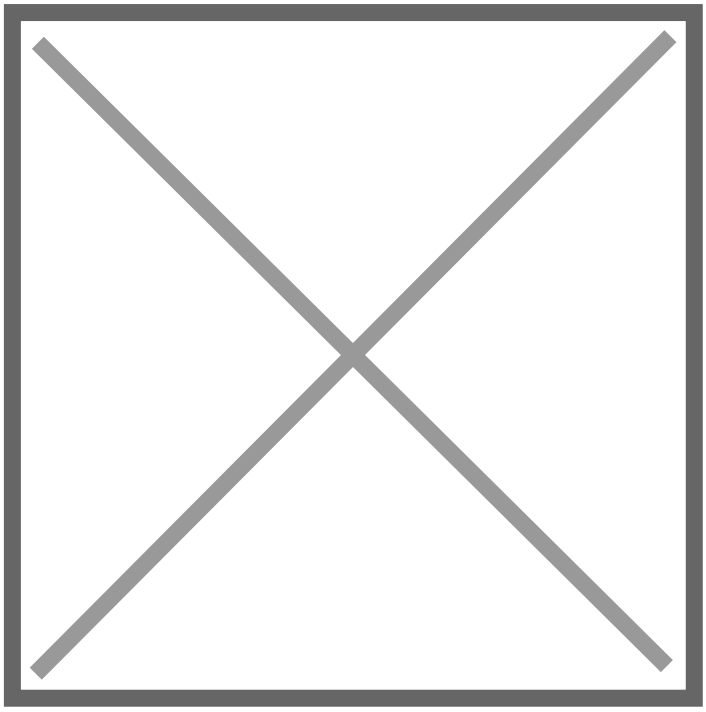
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Biotech Magnet

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The concentration of medical expertise has made the region a magnet for the biotech and pharma companies.

The British Midlands has emerged as a focal point for specialized medical technology companies. In recent years, the region has seen an explosion of research and scientific breakthroughs. For instance Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI, pioneered at the University of Nottingham) was developed here; so was genetic fingerprinting (discovered at Leicester University). Specialist clusters are springing up across the British Midlands and, currently, there are about 700 medical technology companies employing 16,000 people. Among the world class companies located here are AstraZeneca, Bayer plc, Boots, Sunrise Medical and 3M Laboratories.

The British Midlands has witnessed strong research in diagnostics, cell signalling and the causes and treatment of cancer. The British Midlands has been attractive as it is strategically located for easy access to the UK and Europe. As with the other parts of the country, the universities in the region achieve more 1st Class degrees than anywhere else in the UK. For instance, The University of Nottingham is one of the top four research-led institutions in the UK and a member of The Russell Group of Universities. It has a new $14 million Institute of Drug Discovery and a $10 million Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences. Warwick University, another Russell Group University, renowned for its biological sciences research, has a new $9 million Medical Research Institute linking its research to the clinical skills of doctors at five Midlands' hospitals. The CRC Institute of Cancer Studies at Birmingham University is reputed for cancer genetics, signal transduction, viral oncology and immunology, cancer gene and immunotherapy and cancer clinical trials

Aston University, which scores the highest rating for its Neurosciences Research Institute, is opening a new $12.8 Million Academy of Life Science. Key activities will include cornea and refractive surgery, brain imaging and human myopia. The Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Centre at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham is part of a $25 million initiative to strengthen clinical research in the UK's National Health Service. Besides, The UK Human Tissue Bank, based at De Montfort University in Leicester, provides non-transplantable human tissue to the UK research community. Leicester De Montfort is the only UK university to hold such a resource.

This expertise is supported by BioCity Nottingham, a bioscience innovation and incubation center, the largest of its kind in the UK and one of the largest in Europe. There are also few other networks of dedicated science parks and incubator parks.

It has been a good base for the medical devices too. For companies involved in the supply and manufacturing of medical equipment, the British Midlands offers ideal trading conditions. Raw materials, components and specialized services can all be found hereÃ¢â?¬â?•from metal fabrication and plastic injection molding to specialized engineering and packaging. Telemedicine was pioneered in the British Midlands and one of the region's many successful foreign investors, Kodak, is currently developing a software system for use in hospitals and remote locations.

Companies from across the medical equipment sector have made their home here, including manufacturers of disability and rehabilitation equipment, ophthalmic technology, biomaterials and active implants.

In addition, there are some specific benefits for companies in this sector:

At Loughborough University, researchers have developed an electronic system that allows signals from medical monitoring equipment to be transmitted across the mobile phone network. Keele University also concentrates in the fields of medical devices, biocompatible materials and materials science. The Medical Devices Faraday Partnership brings together 6 UK universities working alongside industrial organizations to develop new medical and surgical devices.