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Result-oriented research

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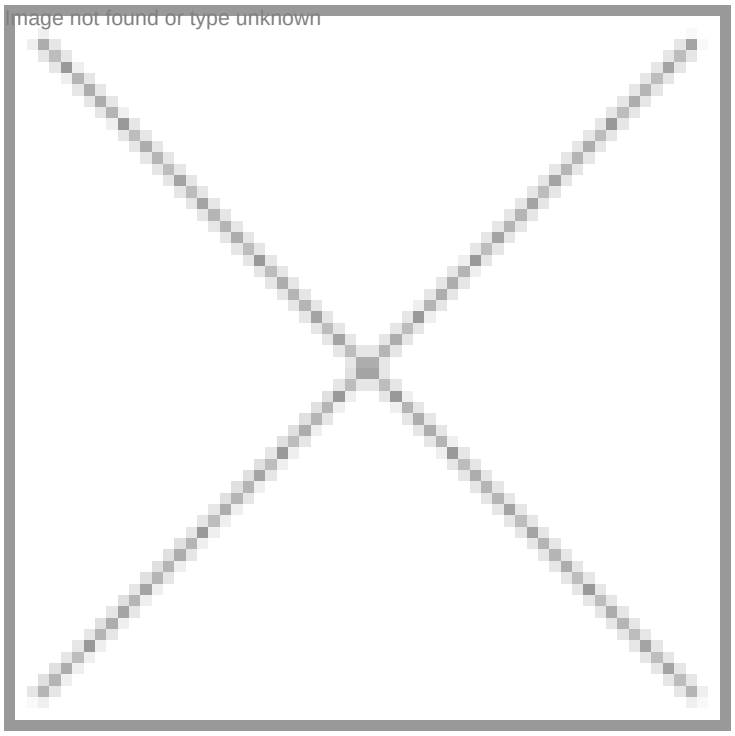

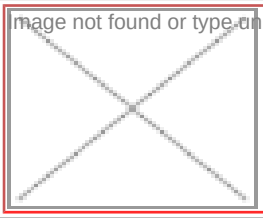

Microbial Research

Dr Girish Sahni
director, Institute of Microbial Technology, Chandigarh

Girish Sahni of Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTECH) is well known for his role in streptokinase research and for his contribution in making key technologies available to the biotech industry. He addressed the dire need to have indigenous protein cardiovascular drugs. And the products of his research have brought smile on the faces of millions of heart patients in India and abroad.

Currently working as the director of IMTECH, Chandigarh, Sahni's areas of specialization are protein engineering, molecular biology, and enzymology. He began his research in 1984 when he was awarded PhD in protein biochemistry from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. Following that, between 1985 and 1986, he went abroad for post-doctoral research involving genetic manipulation of animal viruses at the University of California, USA. Sahni continued to focus his research on protein engineering from 1986 to 1991 as a senior research associate and adjunct faculty at Rockefeller University, New York, and Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York, respectively. Completing his overseas stint, he came back and joined IMTECH as assistant director in 1991. After working at various positions, he went on to become the director of the institute in 2005.

Among the successful technologies developed by Sahni's group at IMTECH is the natural streptokinase product â€œSTPaseâ€? that was commercially launched by Cadila Pharmaceuticals in 2002. Sahni has also developed a third generation novel life saving drug (protein-engineered, therapeutically improved â€œclot-specificâ€? streptokinase) which has been patented worldwide and was licensed to US-based Nostrum Pharma in 2006 and Symmetrix Biotech, India. The drug is expected to be commercialized by 2013.

Sahni's current research includes exploration of structure-function inter-relationships in proteins aimed at fundamental understanding, enzyme mechanisms, and process development for rDNA-based therapeutically important proteins.

Besides finding place in the numerous national and international journals, Sahni's research work has generated four patents. He is a recepient of significant recognition, several awards and fellowships. Sahni was awarded Vasvik Award in biological sciences for the year 2000. He was conferred Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) technology shield in 2001-2002 for natural streptokinase process development leading to successful commercialization. In 2002, he received the national biotechnology product and process development award from the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and was the Ranbaxy awardee in pharmaceutical sciences in 2003. Besides being the fellow of Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore and National Academy of Sciences, Allahabad, Sahni is also fellow of the Association of Microbiologists of India.

Sahni believes that incentivizing the translational research can do wonders for the product development. He feels that young scientists in India must do research that can leave long lasting impression on the minds of the common man.â€?

Rahul Koul in New Delhi