

## Piramal Mumbai R&D unit shut: What next?

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Recently the lifesciences industry heard Piramal's public vocalization announcing the shutdown of its Mumbai R&D unit. Though the company now intends to abandon its R&D in new drug discoveries, in an exclusive interview with *BioSpectrum*, Dr Swati A Piramal, vice chairperson, Piramal Enterprises, said that the company is actually not shutting its Mumbai R&D unit, but rather reorganizing and reallocating its research in discovery research.

"We are just reorganizing people to work in later stages of the drug development rather than new discoveries. We already have an adequate number of discoveries in our pipeline and need to focus our capital on molecules nearer the end-of-development or companion-products, to products which have received approval," added Dr Swati.

The company will now concentrate on its existing portfolio of eight molecules. Piramal's lead molecule Neuraceq (florbetaben) recently received approval from the USFDA and European Medicines Agency.

Dr Swati revealed that the company has an imaging pipeline in areas of cancer, cardiology, and neuroscience.

"Other new products are being developed in anaesthesia. We have signed a joint venture in the development and manufacturing of fluoro-chemicals with Navin Fluorine, an Arvind Mafatlal Group," she commented.

Currently, the company has 800 research personnel globally. In India they are located in Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pithampur, and Chennai. Internationally, they are in the USA, the UK, Scotland, and Germany.

According to Dr Swati, the 200 personnel who are on the spot as a result of the shutdown are being offered with an option to work from Piramal's other locations. The fate of the employees will be known in a month, according to the company, once the voluntary employee separation scheme is complete.

When asked about the status of the current lifesciences R&D in the country, Dr Swati concluded by saying, "I think the regulatory bottlenecks are slowing research and innovation. I hope it will change with the new government."