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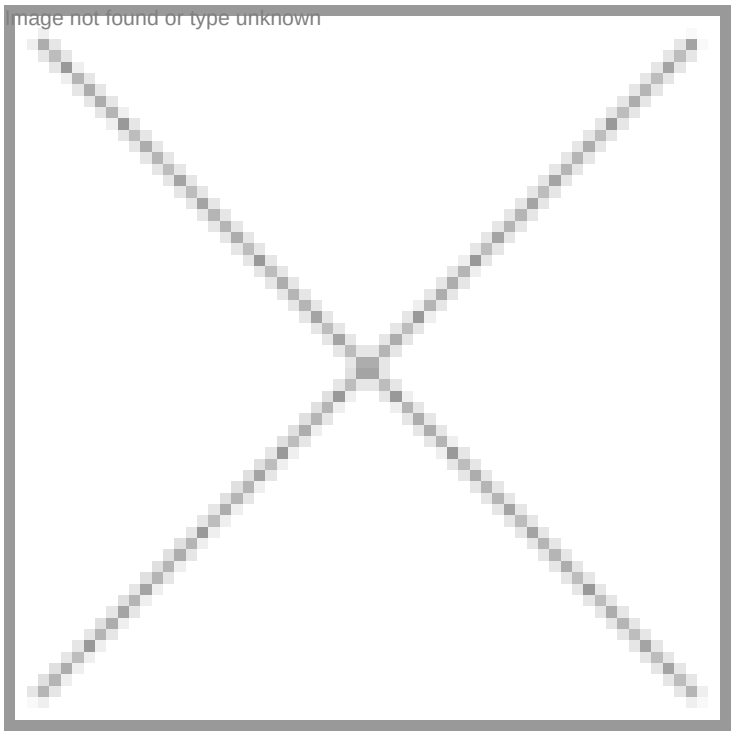

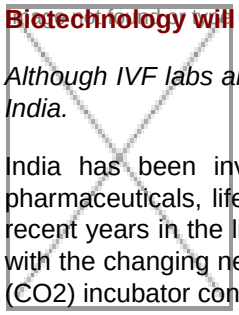

Biotechnology will boost market for CO2 incubators in India

Although IVF labs are major users, the growth of the biotech industry will definitely open up the market for CO2 incubators in India.

India has been involved in many basic research activities in the areas of cell biology, molecular biology, cancer, pharmaceuticals, life sciences and biotechnology. Scientists have made amazing strides during the past decade and in the recent years in the life sciences as well as biotechnology sectors. The technology used in these areas has had to keep pace with the changing needs of the researchers. The lab scenario has changed a lot over a period of time but the Carbon Dioxide (CO2) incubator continues to be a staple equipment in the research lab.

CO2 incubators are one of the common equipment found in the laboratory. These are used for tissue and cell culture applications. These incubators work to control three essential variables related to replicating the mammalian environment; stable CO2 level, temperature, and relative humidity (RH). CO2 incubators allow these elements to work together to create an ambient environment for cells to thrive. The result is a balanced controlled pH, stable temperature, high relative humidity and controlled CO2 level.

Although the ultimate goal of maintaining cell culture stocks has not changed, the functioning and operation of CO2 incubators has become more accurate, more reliable and more convenient. CO2 incubators are designed based on the needs of the researchers. The incubator meets absolute requirements in terms of constant and reproducible environmental conditions for tissue and cell culture applications. The CO2 cell is an ideal addition to the clinical, pharmaceutical, and

biotechnology laboratory.

Prominent players

Thermo Electron Corporation is one of the leading names in this space with a market share of over 50 percent in India. This is after Thermo's recent acquisition of Kendro's range of products. Thermo has four brands in this space namely Forma, Jouan/ Napco, Revco and Heraeus. The other players include NuAire, Sanyo Biomedical, R S Biotech, Sheldon, Memmert, New Brunswick Scientific, Fischer Scientific and Binder. Most of these multinational companies have presence in India through distributors/dealers like Care Biomedicals SM Bioscience, Medi Spec Instruments India and JH Bio Innovations. According to Bimal A Desai, manager - marketing and sales, Thermo Electron LLS India Pvt Ltd, IVF (In Vitro Fertilization) labs and hospitals are major users of CO2 incubators.

Besides the pharma and biotechnology organizations, contract research organizations (CROs) are another key users of these products in India. About 1000 units a year, priced in the range of Rs 1.5â€“4 lakh per unit are sold in the country. "Definitely with the growth of the CRO sector and the biotechnology industry, the market for CO2 incubators will grow at the rate of over 20 percent," Desai said.

He further noted that although Thermo's products are highly priced, there are companies which prefer Thermo's range of brands mainly due to its features, proven track record and technologies. Despite its direct presence in India, Thermo also has indirect presence through its distributors and dealers to market the different brands of CO2 incubators.

Sharing his views, Vippul Chhatbar, director, Medi Spec Instruments India Ltd, which is representing Lishen Scientific Equipments and Biotek in this space, said, "Thermo is a leader in this market with the acquisition of Kendro's range of products. The market for CO2 incubators is growing at over 25 percent." However, he said, about 300-350 units a year, priced in the range of Rs 2â€“2.5 lakh per unit are sold in the Indian market.

Hari Kumar, managing director, JH Bio Innovations Pvt Ltd, said, "I feel there will be about 10-12 brands of CO2 incubators available in India. The total market size is 400-500 units a year and at the rate of Rs 2.5lakh per unit, it translates to Rs 10-12.5 crore size of the Indian market. The Indian market for this type of laboratory equipment is 3-4 percent of the world market and is growing at 35-40 percent against the world market growth of 15-17 percent [Main growth is from BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries]. Looking at the present scenario in pharmaceuticals and life sciences industry, there will be a good demand for these products."

Regarding the manufacturing CO2 incubators in India, he said laboratory instrument manufacturing is spread among 300-400 small and medium sized manufacturers and fabricators in India. "We have not yet witnessed any serious players trying to go for high volume and high quality manufacturing of these like in the US, Europe, Japan and some of the South East Asian countries. The limitation for manufacturing CO2 incubators is just the technologies, " said Hari Kumar.

Since India is emerging as a clinical hub and manufacturing hub for vaccines, the market for CO2 incubators will pick up and expected to grow at over 25 percent.

CO2 Incubator Applications

- Cell and Tissue Culture
- Immunology
- Genetic Engineering
- Protein Synthesis
- Virology
- Neurology
- Pharmacology
- In vitro Fertilization
- Human Vaccines
- Veterinary Vaccines
- Carcinogenicity Testing
- Monoclonal Antibodies

Source: www.shellab.com