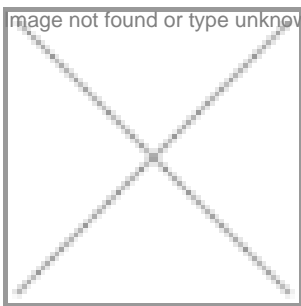


## India, Australia to fight cancer

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Scientists from India and Australia are working jointly on a research project to eradicate the roots of cancer cells, with the support of the Indo-Australian Science and Technology Fund. This is a 12,546 crore (\$2.7 bn) project funded by the Australia India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF). Victoria's Deakin University in Australia, and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (India), have come together to develop a new generation of effective cancer medications, that would kill cancer de-effects in patients, than current treatments.

Wei Duan, associate professor, project leader and researcher with Deakin's Medical School, said, "Our aim is to develop a safe and novel drug delivery system that hits cancer at its core, and kills the cells responsible for the resistance to current therapies, and the recurrence of the disease. The

research aims to develop a 'smart bomb' that can penetrate the cells, and release the drugs within the cells, rather than from outside, and kill the whole tumor, root and all".

This project also has the potential to treat neurodegenerative diseases, heart disease and diabetes, besides killing cancer cells.

### ICMR, UK MRC allot fund for joint research

With changing demography, there is a risk of growing epidemic in Indian population. Therefore, with an aim to promote research and strengthen the existing partnerships, the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) and the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) have jointly initiated a research funding, for non-communicable diseases. This measure aims to promote collaborations between Indian and UK investigators in the area of chronic non-communicable diseases research, exploiting the strengths of the two communities.

A workshop focusing on this topic was organized jointly by the ICMR and the UK MRC, in November 2009 in New Delhi.

The partnership between ICMR and MRC aims to combine the strengths of the Indian and UK Chronic Disease Research communities. The proposed research program should be related to prevailing chronic diseases in India and the UK. In addition, the outcomes should ideally be meaningful to a wider international audience. The research should involve collaboration and co-leadership between Indian and UK researchers/groups, and encompass work in India and the UK.

### **TWAS offers biotech fellowships**

TWAS, the academy of sciences for the developing world, based in Trieste, Italy, is offering the post-graduate training and post-doctoral research scholarships in the field of biotechnology in India.

The other research areas include the physical and natural sciences. In India, the partners in TWAS's Exchange Programs include the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), New Delhi, S N Bose National Center for Basic Sciences and Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science located at Kolkata.

### **DCGI approval for Advaxis' cancer trial**

Biotech company, Advaxis, has received permission from the Drugs Controller General India (DCGI) to conduct a phase II clinical trial of ADXS11-001.

The compound is the company's flagship drug construct, and the trial is to be conducted among 110 women with advanced, metastatic cervical cancer that has progressed subsequent to treatment with cytotoxic therapy. Fiftyfive women will receive ADXS11-001 alone, and the same number of them will receive a combined regimen of both ADXS11-001 and cytotoxic therapy.

Advaxis' phase II clinical trial will provide a real-time survival assessment; making it possible to evaluate the effect of ADXS11-001 on survival compared to historical norms during the trial.

### **DBT invites application for Tata fellowship**

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, has invited applications for the Tata Innovation Fellowship, a highly-competitive scheme aimed at rewarding interdisciplinary work where major emphasis is on innovation and translational research with a potential towards commercialization.

The fellowship is open to Indian nationals residing in India, below the age of 60 years. The applicant should possess a PhD degree in life sciences, agriculture, veterinary science or a master's degree in medical sciences, engineering.