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Suven pharma promoter invests $1-m in CRO, data development

Clip

M S ANAND

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HYDERABAD: The chief promoter of Suven Pharma has pumped in $1 million in Asian Clinical Trials (ACT), to exploit the big opportunity presented by India's emergence as an attractive outsourcing destination for global pharma companies, particularly for clinical research and data development for the sector.

"Eventhough we formed ACT a couple of years back, we are now confident that things would pick up from 2005 onwards where in emphasis would be more on product patents, regulatory compliance, and IPRs," Mr Venkat Jasti, director, ACT, told ET.

Pharma companies spend 30 to 40% of their R&D budgets on speeding up clinical trials.

"A major chunk of clinical costs is outsourced to clinical research organisations (CROs), getting a new drug to market costs about $800 million and takes anywhere between 7-8 years," he said.

Estimates also show that 80% of the total drug discovery costs goes in development — taking the drug through clinical trials.

Trials for phases I, II and III account for the maximum amount of time and cost.
In India, which has heterogeneous gene pool and the easy availability of patients, patient recruitment for trials takes less than six months compared to regulated markets where it takes about 2 years.

Mr Venkatraman Sunder, general manager (corporate affairs and finance), ACT, said that a big portion of the problem in clinical trials is that the information relating to the trials is not evenly distributed, making it difficult for the clinicians to get a complete overview of the data.

"Hence, we are looking at solutions that help automate the clinical trial process of testing and reporting on the effectiveness of new drug targets.

Towards this end, we have implemented Oracle Clinical and were successful in executing as many as three projects over the last four months," Mr Sunder said.

ACT has thousands of data items from clinical trials of a single project.
Capturing data from more than 95% of the thousands of clinical trials is an extremely difficult task.

Even as per the US FDA regulations, a computer generated audit trail of entries has to be maintained, Mr Venkatraman Sunder, general manager (corporate affairs and finance), ACT, said.

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