

LICENCE TO MARKET

CSIR in ₹150 mn deal with Nostrum on clot busters

State-funded lab took 20 years to develop injectable medicine to clear clots; drug enters animal trials next year

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NEW DELHI

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has signed a licensing deal worth nearly \$150 million (₹750 crore) with New Jersey-based Nostrum Pharmaceuticals Inc. to develop and market a new generation of clot busters.

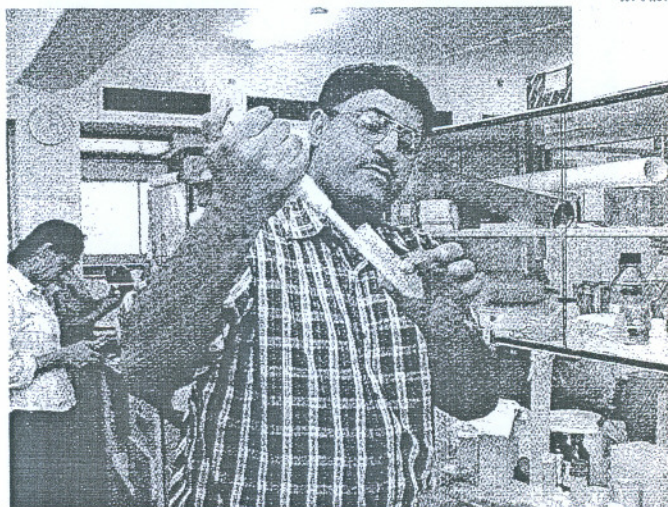
It is the biggest-ever drug-licensing deal involving a state-funded research and development lab.

The National Institute of Immunology, a lab funded by the department of biotechnology, licensed an insulin molecule to another US-based company for ₹50 crore earlier this year.

The Chandigarh-based Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTech), a CSIR lab, developed the injectable medicine to clear clots over 20 years of research.

It has earlier licensed a slew of molecules for heart attacks and strokes to Nostrum and Indian pharma firms such as Cadilla Pharma Ltd and Lupin India Ltd in the past decade.

The new clot busters will enter animal trials later next year, IMTech director Girish Sahni said. If the preliminary trials



Risk reliever : IMTech director Girish Sahni says the new drug substantially reduces the risk of reocclusion, the recurrence of a blockage in an artery after it has been treated.

are successful, it would take at least three years for them to hit the market.

Sahni said the new clot busters substantially reduced the risk of reocclusion, the recurrence of a blockage in an artery after it has been treated, which limits the effectiveness of currently available clot busters.

The money from the deal will flow into CSIR coffers in tranches after specific milestones have been achieved, said Samir Brahmachari, director general of CSIR, India's largest scientific organization.

The deal was significant because of its size as well as the confidence it inspired in scientists to develop better drugs, he added.

"CSIR will continue to be fo-

cused on its social responsibilities," said Brahmachari. "We've spent significantly on patenting also and it's deals like these that help recover our costs and channel resources into newer drugs for India."

"Licensing of these molecules to Nostrum is a proud achievement for IMTech, especially since these are the third- and fourth-generation molecules that IMTech has licensed out to Nostrum, and should fill an acute need in the world, especially (in) developing countries, where effective but affordable treatments for circulatory disorders such as heart attacks and stroke are sorely needed over the more expensive option of surgery," Sahni said in a statement.

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