

Astra Zeneca shuts neglected disease R&D site in Bangalore

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Bangalore: AstraZeneca has revealed that it will shut down its Bangalore-based Avishkar R&D center and slash 170 jobs later this year. The decision is part of AstraZeneca's broader global business strategy to simplify its R&D footprint. Employees affected by the changes will start to leave the company at the end of April and the site is expected to close later this year, it said.

The company, however, said that it will maintain its commercial and manufacturing operations in India. The company also revealed informed that its India commercial organization and clinical operations based at Avishkar will move to a new location in Bangalore later this year.

It will focus resources on three core therapy areas, including oncology, cardiovascular and metabolic diseases and respiratory, inflammation and autoimmunity. The company will no longer carry out early stage research into neglected tropical diseases, TB and malaria, however, would continue to provide expertise.

The company said, "The closure of the site is expected to impact 168 full-time employees who work on pharmaceutical development and drug discovery research into neglected tropical disease, tuberculosis and malaria. AstraZeneca will continue to provide expertise to help advance existing third-party neglected tropical diseases, malaria and TB research programmes for the benefit of patients."

"We realize this is difficult news for our research colleagues in Bangalore and our priority is to support them over the coming months. We have not taken this decision lightly. These changes reflect the company's strategic focus on investing in our core therapy areas and simplifying our R&D footprint," Mr Sudhir Nambiar, site head and VP, pharmaceutical development, R&D Bangalore said.