BioSpectrum the business of Bio & Health Sciences ASIA EDITION

International Clinical trials day Special: Asia's clinical trials landscape

May 20, 2015 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

Asia's clinical trials landscape



Singapore: Clinical trials were once undertaken largely in the West. However many Asian countries are now emerging as top destinations for clinical trials. For more than a decade, the emerging markets of Asia-Pacific have held special promise for the global pharmaceutical industry. Driven by a combination of rapidly expanding economies, technological innovation and a talented workforce, the region has seen explosive growth in both economic and political power.

There is a growing educated middle class interested in health issues, aging populations, and an increasing pool of talented human resources. As economic prosperity impacts on the way people live, chronic and lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and heart disease are beginning to affect more of the population in the region. These factors, together with people's growing ability to spend more on healthcare have all helped to attract pharmaceutical research and development and CROs in growing numbers to Asia.

Australia is the most mature clinical trial market in Asia with a well-defined regulatory system and rapid approvals. Singapore is another destination that has attracted research and development by providing incentive programs and being at the forefront of intellectual property protection. South Korea has also become a clinical development hub in Asia, helped by government support.

Though significant progress has been made, countries like Taiwan, Malaysia, India and China are yet to overcome regulatory hurdles and challenges and emerge as top destinations for clinical trials. Recruitment of patients for clinical trials, no harmonized regulations, retention if research participants, sick population are some of the challenges that Asian countries need to address.