

News Details

Bharat Biotech to rival SmithKline in production of H B vaccine

Sep 16, 1999

Hyderabad: BHARAT Biotech has set up a capacity to manufacture 100 million doses of Hepatitis-B vaccine per annum. The capacity is understood to be almost equivalent to that of drug multinational SmithKline Beecham Pharma. Bharat Biotech is also in the process of launching Streptokinase, a cardiac drug.

Addressing a press gathering, Dr Krishna M Ella, CMD, Bharat Biotech, said, "Our facilities have been structured to manufacture over 100 million doses of Hepatitis-B vaccine. It is the largest manufacturing unit of its kind in the South."

The Hepatitis-B vaccine is being produced using the recombinant DNA technology route. "We have established a most advanced research and manufacturing facility. The procedures and practices meet the requirements laid down by USFDA, UKMCA and WHO," Dr Ella said.

The disease accounts for more than 50 per cent of chronic liver diseases and liver cancer in the country. Hepatitis is considered to be 100 times deadlier than AIDS. It requires only 0.00004 ml of infected blood to transmit the Hepatitis-B virus, unlike AIDS wherein 0.1 ml of infected blood is required for the transmission.

Earlier, WHO made a recommendation that all countries need to introduce the Hepatitis-B vaccine in their immunisation programmes. This led to a flurry of activity among the Indian pharmaceutical companies. The action is more visible in Hyderabad, where at least four companies - Bharat Biotech, Shanta Biotechnics, Aditya Alkaloids and Transgene Biotek - have bagged licenses from the department of biotechnology to manufacture the Hepatitis-B vaccine.