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India expanding as drug trials centre
 By **Rosie Murray-West, City Correspondent** (Filed: 29/03/2004)

India may be the next destination for large-scale clinical trials by pharmaceuticals companies, research by a British consultancy suggests.

According to Sunil Shah at Oxygen Healthcare, the shifts in India's legal and patent policies, together with emerging Indian pharmaceutical companies, could increase the proportion of global clinical trials done in India from 1pc to 10pc.

"The opportunities in India for the drug development industry in the next five years are comparable to the impact on the technology industry over the last five," he said.

Already, a number of multinational drug companies have invested in India. AstraZeneca has opened a \$10m research facility in Bangalore, while Pfizer has moved into Mumbai (Bombay). GlaxoSmithKline has entered an innovative partnership with Indian drug company Ranbaxy to develop drugs.

Mr Shah estimates that the cost of conducting a clinical trial on a drug in India is less than half of the total cost in the UK. Another factor for its popularity is the large number of medical graduates fluent in English that come from India's 162 medical colleges every year.

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