

Cost-effective anti-cholesterol molecule developed in India

Helix Biotech Limited, the Bangalore-based pharmaceutical and healthcare arm of the Biocon Group is all set to launch its latest cost-effective anti-cholesterol molecule, 'Pravastatin', for the first time in India. This follows the company's success with earlier molecules: Lovastatin, Simvastatin and Aovastatin, which have recorded an impressive performance. Helix has set up a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility at a project cost of approximately US\$11 million. Presently, pilot plant trials are on and commercial production is expected to commence in the next two months.

The sophisticated plant has a two-stage fermentation unit. The first stage will be for the production of Compactin. In the second stage, Compactin will be converted into Pravastatin. The whole process of fermentation takes around 21 days. Eighty per cent of Pravastatin produced is scheduled for export to international markets including North America, Europe and Japan. Pravastatin will be competing with Pravacol, which is manufactured by Sangko of Japan and marketed by Bristol Myers and Squibs. (The Eastern Pharma Pulse, 23 March 2000)