

## CCMB develops new drug assay system

Researchers at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), India, have developed a novel drug testing method that eliminates the need for using mice. The team employed genetic engineering to create a new breed of the fruit fly *Drosophila*, that can be used for screening and validating drugs. The 'transgenic' flies breed quickly and have a short lifetime of about 15 days. The transgenic flies were specifically bred for evaluating the efficacy of existing and new drugs against certain types of cancer.

This is the first time that fruit flies have been used for drug screening and validation. A United States-based company has entered into a contract with CCMB to validate some of its new anti-cancer drugs using the *Drosophila* assay system. The CCMB assay system has also been selected by the Indian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research for validating several plant-derived molecules that exhibit anti-cancer properties. (Chemical Weekly, December 2001)