

# **akampion Meets... Dr. Sanjay Mohan Shrivastava, General Manager of Venus Pharma GmbH**

**akampion:** *Can you tell us about the history of Venus Pharma?*

**SMS:** Venus has its origin in the Indian generics industry and was founded in 1989 as Venus Remedies Ltd. However, the company meanwhile is very strong in innovative pharmaceutical products, in particular in fixed-dose combinations. Venus operates a large research center in India, which is accredited by the Indian government. Moreover, the company holds about 370 patents, has around 100 products and employs about 1,500 people in India alone. There are currently six offices worldwide – Venus Pharma GmbH was established in Germany in March 2006 and meanwhile has a staff of 15 full- and 30 part-time employees.

**akampion:** *Why did the company decide to establish a German subsidiary?*

**SMS:** We had innovative products and wanted a presence in the German market, as it is a very important market in itself and because it will help us to expand to other European countries. We acquired the Werne facility, which now serves as our EU-GMP facility for packaging of tablets and injectables, including quality control testing, batch release, packaging, warehouse and logistics etc. At present, we are the only Indian company that has accomplished this.

**akampion:** *Which products are on the market in Europe right now?*

**SMS:** We have CTD dossiers available for Meropenem, Gemcitabine, Irinotecan, Topotecan and Docetaxel, and we are searching for partners in various European countries. For Meropenem, Gemcitabine, Irinotecan and Docetaxel we have already been granted a Marketing Authorisation in some countries, and in addition we have ongoing registration procedures for these products as well as for Topotecan and Sulbactamax, a patent protected research product in Europe.

**akampion:** *What are your plans for the future?*

**SMS:** For the near future, we are planning to expand our product portfolio and to prepare CTD dossiers for anti-cancer drugs particularly Oxaliplatin and Cisplatin, and for the next years we have ambitious plans: within the next 2 to 3 years we aim to have a minimum of 15 products with European marketing authorization, including Sulbactamax, our proprietary novel antibiotic combination product, and a couple of other innovative medicines of cephalosporin and carbapenem group.

**akampion:** *Can you detail the innovation of Sulbactamax?*

**SMS:** Sulbactamax is patent-protected combination of Ceftriaxone, Sulbactam and VRP 1034. Ceftriaxone, a cephalosporin, breaks the bacterial cell wall, Sulbactam inhibits beta-lactamases, enzymes that are expressed by bacteria resistant to many antibiotics, and VRP 1034 is a potent chelating agent which competes with the microorganism for essential metal ions. As a result, it destabilizes the bacterial cell wall structure and enhances the susceptibility of bacteria to the antibiotics. This product provides excellent results against beta-lactam resistant *E. coli* and other bacteria.

**akampion:** *Are you also interested in in-licensing of drugs or drug candidates?*

**SMS:** No, not at present. On the contrary, we are seeking to out-license drugs. But we might be interested in in-licensing compounds to develop a new formulation. Already, we in-licensed a molecule suitable for cancer diagnostics for which we developed a new formulation.

**akampion:** *How long have you been living in Germany now? We assume life here is pretty different compared to India?*

**SMS (laughs):** I moved to Germany with my family two years ago. First of all, the weather is quite different. Of course, it is also another culture, but we have always been met with openness and friendliness here, even though sometimes people are a bit more reserved than in India. And certainly, rules and regulations are different. The move has probably been easier for me than for the rest of my family – I spend most of my time in the office, anyway.