Company News

CompuMed Presents Bone Research Findings in Normal Chinese Population

US-based CompuMed, a leading provider of computer based medical diagnostics, has presented the findings of investigation of phalangeal bone mineral density (BMD) in a normal Chinese population at the First International Conference on Bone Mineral Research held recently in Beijing from September 15-19, 2001. The study, sponsored by CompuMed, was conducted using the OsteoGram®, the company’s proprietary software that utilizes a standard X-ray machine to determine bone mineral density as an indicator of fracture risk.

Dr. Liu Zhonghou, a well-known medical expert on osteoporosis in China, conducted the study in collaboration with the China Osteoporosis Foundation. Dr. Liu said that he is happy to find that the results of this study correlated highly with the bone mineral density results of the 40,000 Chinese Single-Photon Absorptiometry (SPA) forearm database investigated in the late 1980s.

This is further proof that Radiographic Absorptiometry (RA) is a reliable and inexpensive method of assessing BMD, and therefore of phalangeal BMD determined from a standard hand X-ray using RA is an accurate way to predict fracture risk.

Dr. Herbert S. Lightstone, president of CompuMed, said that his company has started to explore international marketing opportunities for the OsteoGram® and has begun to participate in conferences outside the US.

Working with experts like Dr. Liu and presenting research findings at international medical conferences gives CompuMed the opportunity to further the study of BMD.

It also enables the company to share with medical researchers from around the world the many benefits of the OsteoGram®, a cost effective alternative to the very expensive DEXA machines currently on the market.

Dr. Lightstone added that in addition to its participation in the China conference, the OsteoGram® was also marketed at the 47th Argentine Congress of Radiology Image Diagnosis and Radiant Therapy held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from September 5 to 7, 2001.

The First International Conference on Bone Mineral Research, attended by over 500 participants representing about 20 countries, was intended to promote bone mineral research in the developing countries.

The scientific program served to update medical professionals on current research, available treatments, and diagnostic tools.

Conference sponsors included the China Osteoporosis Foundation (COF), the Beijing Mentougou District Government, International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF), International Bone and Mineral Society (IBMS), and the Osteoporosis Committee of China Gerontological Society (OCCGS).

Based in Los Angeles, CompuMed employs computer technology for diagnostics. The company’s OsteoGram® software requires no special training and has been cleared by the FDA for commercial use.

CompuMed has also developed computer-aided telemedicine services for cardiology and currently provides on-line computer interpretation of electrocardiograms (ECG’s) to physicians, government and corporate healthcare providers.

In Dr. Liu’s study, BMD is determined from a standard hand X-ray using RA to predict future fracture risks of the hip and spine. Some 583 Chinese people between the ages of 10 and 89 participated in the study that used CompuMed’s OsteoGram® to determine BMD. The results of the study showed a peak BMD and a percentage BMD loss in males and females that complies with the general characteristics of a BMD normative database. In addition, the results highly correlated with a major SPA forearm investigation conducted on the same race in the late 1980s.
Rocky Mountain’s China Business to Expand Internationally

Mr. Jiang Shao Shu, general manager of the China branch operations of the Canada-based Rocky Mountain Ginseng (RMGS), has announced recently in Fuzhou, China, that he is establishing an international division to enable the company to market internationally not only its goods, but also a broad range of high quality health foods produced by other manufacturers.

Mr. Jiang said that there are three reasons for this. First, he is confident that China will become a member of the WTO in December this year. Such a membership will greatly facilitate the marketing of Chinese goods internationally.

Second, as the company is broadening its supply source of drugs and health foods which will be needed when the company initiates its retail store franchise program later this year, many Chinese manufacturers have asked the company if it will be able to use its North American base to market their products.

The company has earlier reached a distribution agreement with an Inner Mongolia-based company, called Inner Mongolia Alashan Cong Rong Group, which produces highly acclaimed, award winning health foods and tonic wines from desert plants, to distribute their goods in southeastern China’s Fujian province.

An integral part of this agreement is the desire of that company to work with Rocky Mountain on the distribution and marketing of their products in the US. Mr. Jiang added that numerous other companies have expressed interest in taking advantage of its North American affiliation to market their products.

The third reason for establishing an international division is that in North America there is a very large and affluent Asian population who represent a prime target market for RMGS. China’s WTO membership will enable Rocky Mountain to access this market.

RMGS’s head office is located in British Columbia, Canada. The company exports American ginseng to its facilities in Fuzhou, China, where it manufactures and processes American ginseng products. RMGS holds exclusive world processing and distribution rights to several innovative value-added ginseng products developed in North America.

RMGS purchased a drug manufacturing facility in February 1999, now known as Rocky Mountain (Fuzhou) Drug Co. Ltd. This acquisition included all necessary drug and hygiene licenses allowing the company to import, export, manufacture and distribute ginseng products in all the provinces of China. The company has also recently obtained the right to establish company-owned stores and franchised stores anywhere in China.

The company currently produces traditional ginseng products for the Chinese market, which includes selling to its wholesale customers and through its retail stores, with the Chinese factory employing 42 people in processing, sales, accounting and management. Rocky Mountain (Fuzhou) Drug is the first wholly owned Canadian company in the Fujian province.

Taiwan’s UBI Asia Acquires Glaxo’s Pharmaceutical Factory

Taiwan’s largest pharmaceutical company, United Biomedical Inc. (UBI Asia) has recently acquired Glaxo Wellcome Taiwan’s factory for over NT$400 million (US$11.5 million). The company intends to use the factory to manufacture cream drugs and injection agents, as well as other new products.

UBI Asia, set up in 1998, is a joint venture between US-based UBI and Taiwan’s local investors including Taiwan Sugar Corp., China Development Industrial Bank Inc., Yao Hwa Glass Co. and the Executive Yuan Development Fund.

UBI Asia produces drug products in Taiwan with functional antigenic technology transferred from its American parent and sells finished products throughout Asia.

The company also produces drugs on an OEM basis for large international pharmaceutical companies such as Roche, Novartis, and ICN, and...
Pharmagenesis’ Bone Marrow Stimulant PG2 Receives New Drug Certification in China

China’s State Drug Administration (SDA) has recently awarded US-based Pharmagenesis a new drug certificate for its plant-derived hematopoiesis enhancer, PG2, bringing the company a step closer to producing and marketing the drug for patient use.

PG2 is an adjunct to cancer therapy that restores activity of bone marrow after a patient’s bone marrow has been destroyed by chemotherapy. Pharmagenesis’ drug passed strict SDA clinical trials in China earlier this year.

Dr. Nicolas Druz, CEO of Pharmagenesis said that PG2 has proven effective in enhancing a patient’s quality of life during the trauma of cancer therapy. In addition to restoring blood cells, PG2 helps patients feel better, eat better, sleep better and have more energy.

As such, PG2 will have a strong appeal to Chinese physicians and patients. Pharmagenesis also plans to develop derivatives of PG2 for the Western world.

The China SDA is the regulatory equivalent of the US FDA and employs stringent regulations similar to those used in the US drug trials. The SDA issues new drug certificates only after a thorough review of scientific findings gathered during clinical trials. The certificate confirms the drug is safe and effective.

Pharmagenesis will now pursue a good manufacturing practice (GMP) certificate to produce the drug in China. The SDA issues a GMP after inspecting the facility used to produce a drug. Once Pharmagenesis has obtained the GMP certificate, it can manufacture and market PG2 for patient use. The company plans to start PG2 production and sales in the first half of 2002.

Pharmagenesis develops therapies and treatments for cancer, therapy related to bone-marrow suppression and for the management of transplant rejection.

The privately held company focuses on developing ethical pharmaceuticals from purified extracts of plants that have been employed in traditional Chinese medicine for more than 4000 years.

Efficacy is validated by clinical trials conforming to standards of appropriate government regulatory agencies.

Pharmaceuticals developed and/or licensed by the company are being commercialized initially in the high-growth markets of China and Taiwan.

Pharmagenesis’ corporate headquarters and R & D facility, which employs cutting-edge Western medical research techniques, are located in Palo Alto, California. The company also has operations in Beijing and Taipei.

Proteome and Protagen to Collaborate in Protein Study

Australian biotech company, Proteome Systems, and German biotech company, Protagen, have recently announced a collaboration in the analysis of post-translational modifications of proteins.

Under the collaboration, Proteome will have access to Protagen’s methodology and technology for the analysis of protein phosphorylation, and Protagen will have access to Proteome’s methodology and technology for the analysis of protein glycosylation.

Besides this, Dr. Keith Williams, chief executive officer of Proteome, will join the scientific advisory board of Protagen, while Dr. Helmut Meyer, the chief scientific officer of Protagen will join the scientific advisory board of Proteome.
Merck Makes Huge Investments in Singapore

US pharmaceuticals giant Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD), which has opened its US$400 million plant in Singapore, has announced recently that it is pumping in another US$100 million to set up a second facility in Singapore. Mr. Raymond Gilmartin, chairman and CEO of Merck & Co, said that the construction of the second facility has begun and it will be operational by the second half of 2003.

The second plant, a pharmaceutical formulation facility, will produce an investigational combination product used for cholesterol management. It will be located next to MSD's first facility in the Tuas Biomedical Park. MSD, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Merck, will employ over 250 people at both its facilities in Singapore.

The company's first facility is a bulk chemical plant that produces the active ingredient for a drug used in the treatment of osteoarthritis and acute pain. It is MSD's first bulk chemical manufacturing facility in the Asia-Pacific, and is able to produce the active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) for most of Merck's products.

Mr. Gilmartin said that Singapore will be home to some of Merck's key growth products. The facilities here reflect the important role Singapore will play in the global economy.

Quark Biotech Receives Equity Investment from Mitsubishi-Tokyo Pharmaceuticals

Mitsubishi-Tokyo Pharmaceuticals has recently made an equity investment in the US-based Quark Biotech Inc (QBI). The two companies are currently collaborating in the development of drug targets identified in earlier gene discovery programs in neurodegeneration.

The collaboration was recently broadened to discover the genes that are related to other disease areas. Both the companies aim to develop therapeutic treatments for these diseases that correct the causes, rather than just affecting the symptoms.

Mitsubishi-Tokyo will continue to fund research at QBI and collaborate with QBI scientists according to the planned scientific research program. QBI will receive royalties on sales of the products developed from this collaboration, as well as milestone payments.

The investment was made as part of QBI's Series F financing. The Series F is reserved for QBI's strategic partners who recognize QBI's capability to discover drug targets efficiently. Funds from this investment will help
finance the continuing development and preclinical and clinical studies of the drug candidates generated by QBI’s applied genomics technology.

“Mitsubishi-Tokyo hopes to provide society with valuable new medicines,” said Akihiro Tobe, Ph.D., Board Director and President of Research and Development Division of Mitsubishi-Tokyo Pharmaceuticals.

“QBI has been, and will continue to be, an important partner in that mission. QBI’s team, along with its applied genomics technology, will greatly accelerate the drug discovery and development activities of our company.”

“QBI and Mitsubishi-Tokyo share a common goal: to create a healthier future for all people, especially those suffering from difficult-to-treat disease conditions,” said Daniel Zurr, Ph.D., chief executive officer and founder of QBI. Mitsubishi-Tokyo’s investment in QBI affirms the success of our partnership. We have every reason to believe that we will continue that success in the years to come.”

Mitsubishi-Tokyo Pharmaceuticals Inc. is the wholly-owned subsidiary of Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation, one of the largest chemical companies in Japan. The company was established on 1 October, 1999, through merger of the pharmaceutical division of Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation and Tokyo Tanabe Co. Ltd.

Effective 1 October, 2001, Mitsubishi-Tokyo Pharmaceuticals will merge with Welide Corporation and will operate under the name of Mitsubishi Pharma Corporation, with an aim to be a global pharmaceutical company.

QBI is a genomic-based drug discovery and pharmaceutical company with the expertise and proprietary technology platform to find and understand the biological functions of genes critical to virtually any disease.

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Hybrigen will use its proprietary proteomic technologies to discover drug targets that interact with these genes.

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Australia’s Bionomics to Collaborate with Hybrigen on Breast Cancer

Australian Stock Exchange-listed Bionomics Limited and Texas-based Hybrigen have recently signed a letter of intent describing their intention to negotiate the terms of a collaboration to discover drug targets in breast cancer.

The drug target discovery program will be based on genes identified and patented by Bionomics, focused initially on two genes known as TSG18 and BNO1. TGS18 is undergoing study as a breast cancer tumor suppressor gene; BNO1 has been shown to induce programmed cell death in breast cancer cells. Hybrigen will use its proprietary proteomic technologies to discover drug targets that interact with these genes. The two companies will co-own the drug targets developed in this program.

The president and chief executive officer of Hybrigen, David Edwards, said “We are pleased to announce this exciting collaboration with Bionomics. Hybrigen’s world-class technologies enable us to discover drug targets in ways that no competitive proteomic technology can match. We are especially pleased to be attacking breast cancer, and we are hopeful our efforts will make a difference in the treatment of this terrible disease.”

Marcus Jeffry Miller, vice president of Marketing and Business Development of Hybrigen said, “This alliance continues our strategy of creating partnerships that expand our access to novel genes and complementary technologies.”

Deborah Rathjen, chief executive officer and managing director of Bionomics said, “Bionomics is a world leader in the discovery of genes for breast cancer and has filed patent applications for over 60 genes which may be causative factors in the disease process.

Hybrigen’s technologies for rapid discovery of disease pathways are synergistic and complementary with those of Bionomics. This alliance, which is an

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GlaxoSmithKline and Tanabe Seiyaku to Team Up on Drug Research

GlaxoSmithKline plc (GSK) and Tanabe Seiyaku Co Ltd. recently announced that they have signed a letter of intent to enter into a broad-ranging global collaboration on the research, development and commercialisation of a series of compounds, which covers a range of potential therapeutic areas, including psychiatry, neurology, urology and diabetes.

Although the terms of the agreement remain to be finalized, under the letter of intent, GSK will gain access to pre-clinical compounds from Tanabe, with the possibility of bringing additional new compounds within the scope of the collaboration at a later date.

This worldwide collaboration will allow Tanabe and GSK to share commercialization rights in specific territories. GSK and Tanabe will form an Executive Steering Committee to oversee the research, development and marketing of the compounds.

“This collaboration with GSK will promote our effort to revitalize our research organization, to maximize the efficiency of drug discovery process and to speed up the R&D operations in developing innovative products,” said Mr. Shoei Nakashima, senior managing director, Tanabe Seiyaku Co. Ltd.

“This agreement is another example of excellent synergy between GSK’s expertise in research, development and commercialization with that of Tanabe’s strong scientific endeavours, so that together we can maximise the worldwide potential of promising new compounds,” said Dr. Tadataka Yamada, chairman, R&D, GSK.

India’s Leading Biotech Group Awaits Approval for First Local Immuno-Suppressant Drug

India’s leading biotechnology group, Biocon, is awaiting for approval from the Director Control General of India for its new immuno-suppressant drug, mycophenolatemofetil.

The approval is expected to be obtained in a month’s time, following which the company will start commercial launch of the drug in the domestic market.

Mycophenolatemofetil was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 1995 for the prevention of renal allograft rejection and was subsequently approved for cardiac allograft. It is used in conjunction with cyclosporine and corticosteroids for the prevention of rejection in patients with a renal allograft.

Biocon took about two years to develop the drug. Besides developing the drug, the company has been able to successfully scale-up the production of the drug. This is the first time mycophenolatemofetil is manufactured in India. It will thus be available at an affordable price. So far only Roche’s imported brand of the drug was available in India.

Biocon has a well established track record of innovation and profitability. The group has acquired several high value intellectual property rights both in the area of enzymes and pharmaceuticals. Besides this, the group’s venture into bioinformatics and clinical studies provides it with a powerful platform of intellectual property rights-linked opportunities.

Biocon received the US patent for its advanced bioreactor — the Plafractor — in March this year. The Plafractor is able to deliver both high value products and technologies.

The Plafractor’s quality of production and its unique contained fermentation capabilities makes it a breakthrough technology with wide applications in enzymes and pharmaceutical manufacturing. Mycophenolatemofetil was developed using the Plafractor technology.
Guidant Announces Market Release of Its Most Advanced Pacemaker Systems in Japan

US-based Guidant Corporation has recently announced the Japanese market release of its most advanced pacemaker devices — the PULSAR™ MAX II blended-sensor pacemaker system and the DISCOVERY™ II single-sensor system.

"The launch of the PULSAR MAX II and DISCOVERY II, coupled with the recent launch of the MINI™ IV defibrillator, for the first time positions our cardiac rhythm management business in Japan with two highly competitive product lines," said Dana G. Mead, Jr., president, Japan, Asia/Pacific operations.

"These new pacemaker families represent Guidant’s most current pacemaker technology and we have seen strong acceptance of these products in both the US and European markets. To maximize our market impact with these Guidant developed and manufactured technologies, we will utilize both our direct sales channel and our distribution partner, Japan Lifeline Co." said Mr. Mead.

The introduction of the PULSAR MAX II and DISCOVERY II is part of Guidant’s ongoing effort to provide the most advanced treatment options to patients in Japan and worldwide.

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The device’s proprietary blended sensor capability is designed to measure patient motion and a patient’s respiration rate to optimize device therapy for the patient.

The PULSAR MAX II and DISCOVERY II systems both introduce new features designed to help physicians manage patients with atrial arrhythmias. These features are intended to stabilize the primary pumping action of the heart during periods of atrial fibrillation by providing pacing at regular intervals in the ventricle during atrial arrhythmias.

The PULSAR MAX II also has a sophisticated algorithm designed to provide an appropriate heart rate for a patient’s given level of activity.

The device’s proprietary blended sensor capability is designed to measure patient motion and a patient’s respiration rate to optimize device therapy for the patient.

The devices also offer a unique combination of features that provide a patient history profile. For example, the new stored electrogram (EGM) capability captures arrhythmias of the heart and records them for interpretation.

An arrhythmia logbook — a screen that displays all the arrhythmias a patient has had since the last check-in and allows the physician to investigate any one in further detail — is also included.

The devices also include features that allow the clinician to easily and quickly perform a comprehensive set of automatic tests and follow-up operations. The result is one concise report that summarizes data needed for informed patient management.

"These new pacemakers from Guidant provide unique and truly meaningful therapeutic features that my patients will appreciate. Also, I am able to learn more about my patients and their condition by using the stored EGMs and arrhythmia logbook. I am very excited to be able to use this state-of-the-art technology," said Haruhiko Abe, MD PhD, assistant professor and lecturer, University of Occupational and Environmental Health, Kitakyushu, Japan.

The PULSAR MAX II and DISCOVERY II are designed to treat bradycardia, a condition which occurs when the heart is not pumping as quickly as it should, and the body is not getting the oxygen it needs.

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Guidant Corporation pioneers lifesaving technology. The company develops, manufactures and markets a broad array of products and services that enable less invasive care for certain medical conditions.
ES Cell International Offers Its Embryonic Stem Cells to Scientists Worldwide

The Singapore-registered company formed by a scientist from the National University of Singapore and Monash University is potentially a major stem cell supplier.

ES Cell International, a Singapore-registered company, holds six out of the 64 cell lines produced from human embryos worldwide that meet the criteria for federal funding announced by US President George Bush on 9 August, 2001.

Professor Ariff Bongso from the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, National University of Singapore, in collaboration with the Monash University of Reproduction and Development in Australia, is credited with producing the cell lines. He is ES Cell International’s Singapore-based principal investigator.

His team grew these cells from six excess embryos produced during in vitro fertilization treatment of women in Singapore.

It is notable that Prof. Bongso was part of the team that produced the first test-tube baby in Asia in 1983. In 1993 he helped to develop a breakthrough technique to grow a fertilized human egg into a five-day-old embryo outside the mother’s womb.

It was during this time that Prof. Bongso realized the potential of the embryonic stem cells to develop into any specialized type of cell.

Professor Bongso then pursued further research into embryonic stem cells. He had no problem extracting the cells from the embryos but had difficulty in preventing them from spontaneously turning into more specialized cell types. With help from other scientists, his team managed to establish a self-perpetuating colony of stem cells in 1998.

Following this, in July 2000 his team in collaboration with the Monash University of Reproduction and Development in Australia formed the company ES Cell International. Funding for the company was provided by the Singapore Economic Development Board and an Australian group of private investors.

Currently ES Cell International, which intends to offer its cells to other scientists worldwide, is characterizing the cells into nerve and heart cells, and islets of Langerhans. The company hopes to find ways to turn stem cells into treatments for a range of debilitating illnesses such as Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s disease. At present, the company has operations in Singapore, Australia, Israel and Holland. It is planning to set up its main stem cell research and production facility in Singapore soon.

Taisho Pharmaceutical Merges With Tanabe Seiyaku Co.

A recent merger between Japan’s top over-the-counter (OTC) drug maker, and the country’s 10th-ranked pharmaceutical company, will result in the establishment of the nation’s third-largest drug maker.

The alliance between Taisho Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. and Tanabe Seiyaku Co. Ltd. will allow for their synergistic development and enable the joint holding company to face up to fierce competition from foreign drug giants keen on a bigger stake in the world’s second-largest pharmaceuticals market.

According to Taisho’s president, Akira Uehara, the integration will provide the necessary size for future expansion of bases. The new company will now have the financial resources to spend 55 to 60 billion yen (US$510 million) on research and development.

Under the terms of the alliance, Taisho will take over Tanabe’s OTC operations while Tanabe will absorb Taisho’s non-OTC businesses. In the past, Taisho’s profits originated mainly from its OTC energy drink “Lipovitan D” and a popular hair growth tonic.

The company now has plans to focus on prescription drugs, and is targeting on earning half its revenue from sales of the drugs.

This agreement is also beneficial to Tanabe, a company known for its drugs for the circulatory and nervous systems. Through this merger, Tanabe has found
a way to reduce development costs incurred in a global race to produce new genome-based drugs.

As a result of the collaboration, market analysts predict that the targeted sales of Taisho and Tanabe will be around 500 billion yen (US$4.25 billion), thus making them Japan’s No. 3 drug maker after Takeda Chemical Industries and Sankyo Co. Ltd.

Tanabe had also recently agreed to provide GlaxoSmithKline free access to a range of compounds from the Japanese firm.

India’s Cadila Healthcare to Acquire Kopran’s Heart Drug Aten

In a bid to strengthen its cardiovascular franchise, India’s Cadila healthcare has recently acquired Kopran’s leading heart drug, Aten*, for Rs95 crore (US$19.8 million). The purchase price works out to an acquisition multiple of more than 2.5 times the brand’s sales.

Analysts predict that the acquisition will boost Cadila’s leadership position in the cardiovascular therapy segment (where it already has some strong brands like Atovar and Losacar), with a market share of 8.3 percent, ahead of India’s third-largest drug maker Cipla.

Kopran is dependent on Cadila’s funds to pay back loans and invest in growth plans for prescription formulations, over-the-counter products, and research and development.

Though at the expense of losing a highly profitable brand in its product basket, the move will help to infuse the much needed funds, especially after the company’s other plans to raise funds by placing equity with financial investors failed to take off. Kopran also suffered a major financial setback when the latest stock market scam broke out as it had loaned funds via inter-corporate deposits to stockbroker Ketan Parekh’s companies.

According to the agreement, Kopran will also co-market Cadila’s new products in the diabetes, central nervous system, and other specialty segments. These products include psychiatry drugs Olzep, and Zolipidem, and anti-diabetes drug Gilran.

*Aten is a brand of the anti-hypertensive and anti-anginal drug atenolol.

Rules and Regulations

Agreement Aimed at Easing Mental Illness Burden in West Pacific

Some 36 countries and territories in the western Pacific have recently signed an agreement with the World Health Organization (WHO) aimed at easing the burden of mental illness in the region. WHO Western Pacific Regional Committee member-countries have adopted a five-point strategy for mental health at the 52nd session of the committee held recently in Brunei.

Key elements of the strategy are advocacy and information dissemination, enhanced delivery of mental healthcare, values formation regarding mental healthcare, legislation to help governments act on mental health issues, and continued research.

Dr. Shigeru Omi, WHO regional director for the western Pacific, said that the mental health strategy marks the beginning of a region-wide commitment to treating mental disorders. He believes that mental health should be promoted as much as physical health. Dr. Omi said that WHO has seen the success of collaboration, as partners in health in the October 2000 declaration of the region as polio-free. WHO is also taking steps to combat AIDS and tuberculosis. It is time to work together to improve mental health.

The objective of the regional strategy for mental health is twofold — to decrease the burden of mental illness and disability, and to improve mental health.

Dr. Helen Herrman, WHO regional adviser on mental health, said that the world organization will lead a series of consultations with governments on implementing the strategy at the national level. She hopes that a dialogue on the strategy will eventually lead to a marked increase in government spending on mental health and that other donor agencies will take an interest in funding mental health initiatives.

WHO official said that one in five individual worldwide will be affected by a mental disorder, including epilepsy and intellectual disability, in his or her lifetime. Five of the ten leading causes of disability are mental disorders. They are depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or manic depression, substance abuse and obsessive compulsive disorder.