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Single batch drugs for clinical trials

general consensus is that single batch is the preferred option for comparator trials. Certainly, requests for single batches dominate the enquiries we get at Durbin.

As many of you will know, I have worked across many countries and have a reputation for being able to procure and supply in any country. So it surprised some readers when I said that Durbin primarily supply British drugs for clinical trials. Perhaps I should explain why. If a clinical trial is procuring a single batch drug, it obviously has to procure from one country. So the choice has to be made about which country to procure in. Several things will influence this decision: cost, availability of supply, and regulatory environment are the top three. In most instances the UK provides the best balance for these three factors. It has a longstanding respected regulatory body (MHRA) which many countries have taken as a model when initiating their own regulatory authority. The nationalised healthcare system in the UK obviously leads to a dominant single buyer of drugs, which in turn has ensured low drug prices. This combined with recent currency movements means that UK pharmaceuticals are some of the most competitively priced in the world.

Undoubtedly the UK is a large market so there's also an easy availability of pharmaceuticals.

The third key question that has arisen is the issue of whether pharmaceuticals from one country can be used in other countries within a clinical trial environment. In short, the answer is yes. My expert team and I will be more than happy to answer any specific questions. Many of you of course will also be using British drugs within your normal medical practice. Indeed many of you procure these drugs directly from Durbin.

Finally, as we prepare for landing, I'd like to reassure the readers that have contacted me concerned that Durbin was Only working in clinical trials now. Although this is becoming an increasingly important part of our business, our other core divisions including international sales, sales to NGO's and charities and early access programmes, are also going from strength to strength and we continue to work with many customers across the world including of course the Middle East. Once again, it was great to meet so many of you at the Arab Health show, and I hope to see you again next year, if not sooner. **MEH**

It seems appropriate that I pen my regular column for *Middle East Health* on the flight back from Dubai after the Arab Health show. We are always impressed with the quality of the contacts we make at this show and this year was no exception. It was also great to meet so many avid readers of my column.

In my last article I wrote about the increase in global clinical trials and the rise in clinical trial activity within the Middle East. The article clearly struck a chord with a lot of you as my team and I have fielded many enquiries regarding clinical trials in the last month. Given that there is obviously an interest in this area, I thought I'd discuss a few more specifics which are representative of the questions we're being asked.

Some of you have contacted us enquiring why single batches are needed for clinical trials. This is an interesting debate. In general, comparator drugs are sourced from a single batch in order to eliminate inconsistency, increase standardisation between countries, and to reduce costs associated with analysis certification and release into different states. However, clearly having a single batch increases the risk if a recall occurs. At the moment, the

Durbin PLC is a British company based in South Harrow, London. Established in 1963, the company specialises in supplying quality assured pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and consumable supplies to healthcare professionals and aid agencies in over 180 countries. As well as reacting rapidly to emergency situations, Durbin PLC responds to healthcare supply needs from local project level to national scale programmes.

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