

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Clinart MENA - Conducting Clinical Studies in the MENA Region for a Strategic Advantage**

Dr Alaa Assem, Chief Executive Officer, Clinart MENA, a sponsor company at the Marcus Evans Evolution Summit 2012, on what clinical research capabilities and opportunities the MENA region offers

Meeting patient recruitment and enrolment targets are the number one problem in clinical research globally, Dr Alaa Assem, Chief Executive Officer of Clinart MENA points out. To speed up drug development, pharmaceutical companies should consider what the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) can offer - access to large patient pools, as well as local and international expertise. Getting a head start in the MENA markets, with a population of over 300 million and counting, could also prove to be a strategic advantage.

From a contract research organization (CRO) at the upcoming Marcus Evans Evolution Summit 2012 in Munich, Germany, 14 - 16 October, Dr Assem discusses the case for conducting clinical trials in the MENA region.

### **- Why do you consider the MENA region as the next destination for clinical trials?**

With the right awareness and education, we believe that the region can become the next destination for clinical trials in emerging markets, for pharmaceutical companies that want to accelerate drug development.

Meeting patient recruitment and enrolment targets is the number one problem in clinical research globally, which is slowing down drug development. MENA has a predominantly young population compared to an ageing population in the West. It is one of the fastest growing regions in the world, and expected to grow in double digits in the next few years. It stretches from Iran to North Africa, offering a wide range of patients and specific disease areas.

### **- How could conducting clinical research in the region be a strategic advantage?**

Certain diseases, such as diabetes and its associated disorders, are more prevalent here. Conducting research in the area would give a company access to its market and patient group, and expertise in the therapeutic field. Going to the Middle East is not simply about cost efficiency. It is about being the first to gain access to the target patient population.

It is also important to note that the expertise in the Middle East is quite sophisticated and up to the Western standard. Many of the physicians here have trained in major centres in Europe and the US, which translates to international as well as local expertise. This cannot be found in other parts of the world.

**- Why do Western companies tend not to consider the CRO capabilities the region offers?**

There is a lack of awareness of what the region can offer. People see the region as one when in fact it is diverse, with many countries at different stages of development. News on the political situation here concerns many, but it often does not reflect reality.

**- The CRO industry in the region is relatively young. Does this work in your favor?**

We believe it does, as it allows us to grow the industry and learn from other emerging markets that started before us. We have an advantage, because this region is young and evolving. There is a lot of room for us to grow and for others to come into the market. We are very optimistic.

**About Clinart MENA**

Clinart MENA is a full service contract research organization CRO headquartered in UAE, providing services across the MENA Region. Services provided are Clinical Operations, Project Management, Clinical Data Management, Medical Writing, Biostatistics, Training, Regulatory Services and Safety reporting. Clinart is ISO 9001:2008 certified and Oracle Gold Partner capable of providing validated and audited clinical research data management services (OC/RDC). [www.clinart.net](http://www.clinart.net).

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