"Jordan First"

Being a sign of medical progression and a civilised nation, clinical research is on the top of the agenda of medical stakeholders in Jordan who are aiming to secure funds for clinical research. On the other hand, pharmaceutical companies are willing to invest in excellent clinical trials centres. Most clinical trials centres view the future for conducting quality clinical trials and accreditation in following international standards such as ICH GCP, FDA Guidelines or WHO Guidelines.

Taking Jordan as an example, the Jordanian regulatory authorities some time ago adopted international standards in conducting clinical trials. From the regulatory affairs point of view, Jordan is a rich soil for excellent clinical trials where the government has set regulations which are to be followed in both private and governmental hospitals. Moreover, major hospitals or educational hospitals have their own local research ethics committees.

Jordan is a good place for clinical studies because the maximum cost of the study reaches around half the cost in European countries or the US. This is because of low taxes and a competitive cost base in terms of operating costs, plant costs, and development and labour costs. Research ethics committee approval can be obtained in one month. Investigators are highly motivated to take on clinical trials, and are aware of GCP and protocol compliance. Moreover, the availability of investigators with expertise in most medical disciplines is an advantage that Jordan has to offer. Furthermore, the physician-patient relationship is strong, facilitating the recruitment process where the physician can allocate large populations for a particular disease area in a short period of time, and can keep patients committed to follow up.

The flexibility of amending laws and regulations in accordance with the private sector has made Jordan a mature environment for conducting modern business. Moreover, Jordan is one of the first countries to sign a free trade agreement with USA, has joined the WTO, and has a trade pact with the EU. Trade-related intellectual property rights have soothed sponsors' as well as researchers' fears, and consequently will attract investments and funds for R&D and technological development. Jordan has various other advantages, such as strong human and educational resources, a stable and positive image, and international auditing standards.

Funding for clinical trials can be either local or foreign. Locally raised funds are directed in most cases to investigate epidemic diseases or to fill the gap for urgent research that investigates the community's most contagious diseases. As a foreign company, establishing clinical research in another country will bring high risks, such as mastering the regulatory process, the need to monitor the progress of the study, and the most important, bridging the cultural gap. The roles of clinical research organisations are crucial in connecting west to east, while foreign investors are interested in our region but facing the regulatory lack of information. This is where an experienced clinical research organisation can assist in solving local mysteries for interested foreign companies. The clinical research organisation will be local and can operate perfectly within the region, and they can manage the research locally from A to Z. It is good to note that the Middle East has many clinical research organisations that follow international standards in conducting clinical trials.

Having all these advantages, Jordan is a perfect place for clinical research among the Middle Eastern countries. The opportunities for clinical research are substantial, physicians are eager to investigate, costs are notably low, and there are vast resources coupled with a high standard of regulations: the clinical research future should be bright in Jordan. ■

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