



The Curcumin Resource Database Helps to Preclude False Patent Claims

Curcumin is the star therapeutic component of the golden Indian spice turmeric and a hot favorite with researchers across the globe. Indian scientists have created the world's first comprehensive open database on curcumin to foster innovation and generate public awareness.



The Curcumin Resource Database (CRDB) is a collaborative effort of the Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati (IIT-G), Institute of Advanced Study on Science and Technology (IASST) and the Central University of South Bihar (CUSB), Patna.

IASST director N. C. Talukdar said, "CRDB has been developed through a detailed survey of published literatures, some of which include information on traditional knowledge on curcumin. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first such database on curcumin in the world."

The portal aims to assist drug design and development. It also helps create an understanding among masses about the value of traditional knowledge of turmeric, as evidenced from the bitter patent disputes between India and the West. The CRDB can also act as a resource for Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) professionals to help prevent erroneous patents.

The USP of this user-friendly portal is its open-access feature. Also the fact that it serves as a guide to the wonder molecule curcumin via four sections- its 1,186 curcumin analogs, 195 molecular targets, 9,075 peer-reviewed publications, 489 patents and 176 varieties of turmeric makes it a hit with the people. It has a built-in search engine. The data is obtained by extensive data mining and careful curation from numerous sources.

The CRDB was launched in August, 2015. The portal has already garnered nearly 23,000 hits. Talukdar said,

"The database will stimulate new innovation since it will help new innovators avoid repeating research work by showing what has already been done."

Utpal Bora, a professor in IIT-G's Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering, said, "In addition, it has a participatory side too. "It will be constantly updated with new information. Scientists anywhere across the world who have dug out new data on turmeric can add them to the database easily. It is also for the common people who need to be aware of how turmeric components are being harnessed by companies to generate nutraceuticals and a variety of health products that do not require much regulatory control. Our own people are not getting the benefits of this secondary agriculture (agriculture that provides value addition to agricultural products)."

Describing the CRDB as an 'additional resource' to the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) with regard to curcumin, Bora added, "It can act as a resource for IPR professionals to help prevent erroneous patents."