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Focus on needs of society: Dr Weidong Yin

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Dr Weidong Yin, the man behind Sinovac, was honoured with BioSpectrum Asia Pacific Bioscience Industry Entrepreneur of the Year Award for 2011. Sinovac was established in 2001 with a mission of supplying vaccines to eliminate human diseases. Dr Yin has been the chairman, president and CEO of Sinovac since 2003 and is also the general manager of the company's subsidiary Sinovac Biotech (also known as Sinovac Beijing).

Sinovac Biotech produced the Influenza A H1N1 vaccine during swine flu epidemic and marketed it in just 87 days. In 2009, Sinovac was the first company to receive approval for its H1N1 influenza vaccine PANFLU.1.Ã?Â Dr Weidong Yin speaks to BioSpectrum after he won the award. Excerpts from the interview:Ã?Â

How do you balance your activities as an entrepreneur and a researcher?

Currently, my focus is on company management. The detailed R&D work is conducted by our R&D team. I spend most of my time on macro-control efforts in R&D. I consider the missions of the scientist and entrepreneur are the same, but, ultimately the aim is to achieve the goal of the company.

I am neither a scientist nor entrepreneur, I just do what I think is right.

What are your strategies to overcome stress and pressure at work?

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My dream was to eliminate hepatitis A in China. At that time, I thought it would take 30 years to reduce the incidence to five millionths (five in one million), but now it is already done. The new epidemic followed, because of precedent for SARS, H5N1-bird flu vaccine must be developed; and because of precedent for H5N1, H1N1 influenza vaccine must be developed. Stress and pressure always come together, that is why we always stick to innovation. Innovation comes from difficulty. Now, what I am involved in is my favorite career and I really enjoy it.

What is your advice for young entrepreneurs?

Set up a goal and mission that attract employees to work together when establishing the company. Always focus on the needs of the country and society, not just the current market demands.

What was your reaction when you came to know about the BioSpectrum award?

Very surprised and very excited. Thanks to the organizer.