

Dr Rajput: Enjoy challenges to overcome them

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Dr Anuradha Rajput, managing director, Icon Central Laboratories, India, has been working with the company since the past five years. Dr Rajput received her Master of Science (MSc) in Biochemistry during the year 1986 and her PhD in Biochemistry in 1992, both from the University of Mysore in India.

She started her career, working her way up through various hospitals in the Department of Laboratory Medicine, as an associate biochemist. She then got promoted to the position of biochemist and then as the head of the department of biochemistry at Mallya hospital in Bangalore.

Prior to joining Icon in 2008, she served as the general manager and director of a central laboratory called Clinigene International, Bangalore. Here she was responsible for establishing and developing the lab, which became the first laboratory in the country to be accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) in 2002. In 2003, under her guidance, the laboratory also got accredited in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025.

Talking about the turning point in her life, Dr Rajput mentions that, "I started my career in a hospital diagnostic laboratory in 2001, when clinical research was just picking up in India. I had an opportunity to move to this industry and that was the turning point in my professional life. I grew with the industry and learned everything about clinical research."

Dr Rajput, while speaking about her experience in Icon, says, "I have enjoyed playing a leadership role in the laboratory's

growth." In addition to offering laboratory testing, Icon's lab in India also provides logistics, site services, IT validation and data management solutions, including the management of local lab data through a solution called Icon Results Integration Service (IRIS).

"Establishing the laboratory from the ground up has been my crowning achievement at Icon so far," says Dr Rajput. Under her leadership, the lab was accredited by CAP in March 2009, only four months after opening.

Talking about the growing number of clinical trials in Asia, Dr Rajput comments that, "Asia has become very popular with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies for their multinational trials in recent years. Acceptance of India as a clinical research hub by the global pharmaceutical industry has led to a plethora of business opportunities for a variety of ancillary businesses, such as contract research organizations and central laboratories.

Conducting clinical trials represents an average of 37 percent of the total cost of bringing a new drug to market. Very often the efficacy end points are based on laboratory data, therefore testing represents a critical step in supporting the evaluation of a new product."

Dr Rajput believes that every step in her career presented its unique challenges. However, she feels, "If you start enjoying the challenges, they no longer remain and then you overcome them very easily. I try to ensure a positive work environment, where people under my leadership are motivated to meet the challenges of our industry. They in turn become my strength." Creating and retaining a strong working team is the biggest challenge in today's professional life, she feels.

Dr Rajput, who spends her leisure time by listening to music and dancing, further suggests to the budding scientists of India that, "There are a lot of great opportunities in our country; we need good scientists for our developing country and it's up to us to make the difference."