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Ex-Novartis employee arrested for fudging data

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Singapore: A former employee of the Japanese drug maker Novartis, was arrested with allegations of data manipulation. Sources said that the data pertaining to the drugmaker's best-selling blood pressure drug Diovan was falsified in order to promote sales and revenue.

Mr Nobuo Shirahashi (63) was accused of extrapolating the clinical studies data, with a view to boost sales of the drug. The Novartis office was raided by prosecutors on suspicion after a University study revealed that the data could be contorted.

The drug Diovan licensed for sale in more than 100 countries, is effective in curing blood pressure however reports said that additional benefits were attributed to the drug during promotion, stating that it could prevent strokes and angina.

Novartis spokesperson said that the issue is dealt with serious consideration and that the inconvenience and difficulties caused due to this issue, is deeply regretted by the company.

According to Japanese law, exaggerated advertising is an offence and the guilty would be severely punished. This may include two year jail and a compensation of $19,000.