

# **COVERAGE REPORT**

**Tata Trusts support the creation of the Open Source Pharma Foundation**

**On September 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015**

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## Tata Trusts support OSPF — the ‘Linux for drugs’

**PT JYOTHI DATTA**  
Mumbai, September 29

“It may be an idea too hot to handle for some groups wedded to IP,” says Jaykumar Menon, explaining the creation of the Open Source Pharma Foundation.

Taking a “disruptive” approach to public health, the OSPF seeks to be a “Linux (platform) for drugs”.

The Foundation will make data open and public at all stages of the drug development cycle, from early research, leads, during discovery, through to clinical trials on humans and the final generic manu-

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The OSPF has received a commitment of \$3 million (about ₹20 crore) from the Tata Trusts, over three years, towards creation of the Foundation, says Menon, who teaches at Canada’s McGill University.

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BY VYOM DATA

Mumbai, September 23

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<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/tata-trusts-support-creation-of-open-source-pharma-foundation/article7703087.ece>

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## **Tata Trust support the creation of the Open Source Pharma Foundation**

<http://www.indiacsr.in/en/tata-trust-support-the-creation-of-the-open-source-pharma-foundation/>

Seeking to create a world of affordable medicine for all, Tata Trusts has announced their support for the creation of the Open Source Pharma Foundation (OSPF) at OSP2, the 2nd Annual Global Open Source Pharma conference.

Held at Castle Rauischholzhausen in Germany on Sept 01 to 03, 2015, the OSP conference brought together researchers, NGOs, industry professionals, philanthropists and entrepreneurs who aim to create better, cheaper, and faster ways to bring novel therapeutics to market.

In addition to Tata Trusts, the conference included participants from Médecins Sans Frontières, Open Source Drug Discovery (OSDD), Sanofi Aventis, Open Source Malaria, the Open Society Foundations, the Structural Genomics Consortium, INSERM, Oxford University, Philipps-University Marburg, Paris Descartes University, McGill University, FasterCures - a center of the Milken Institute, Transparency Life Sciences, Taros Chemicals, Center for Research and Interdisciplinarity (CRI), Germany's House of Pharma, Gesmer Updegrove LLP, Cures within Reach, Medicines for Malaria Venture, and the Foundation for Neglected Disease Research, and has previously included participants from the WHO/TDR, other large pharmaceutical companies, and several national governments. In four words, Open Source Pharma is "affordable medicine for all." In three words: "Linux for drugs."

Open Source Pharma (OSP) is a concept inspired by the Linux model of operation. Adapted to tackling important public health challenges, it hopes to catalyze radical change in the way we do medical R&D and deliver better and more affordable innovation quicker and cheaper to patients. In brief, crowdsourced, computer-driven drug discovery; IT-enabled clinical trials with open data; and generics manufacture. This year's conference was a follow-up to the first global Open Source Pharma Conference, held at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center, Lake Como, Italy in 2014, where participants adopted a joint mission statement for the movement.

Jaykumar Menon, Convener, Open Source Pharma Foundation, said, "Our vision is to provide affordable medicine for all. We aim to support a growing open source pharma movement that includes existing initiatives to create a comprehensive and alternative open source pharmaceutical system driven by principles of openness, patient need, and affordability. It will systematically address bottlenecks in the pharmaceutical development pipeline by applying open source techniques wherever applicable. This covers all stages, from policy/political will to discovery, development, manufacturing, distribution, and use. Open Source Pharma bends the energies of the universe towards bugs that affect billions. With enough eyes, all bugs are shallow."

In India, the Open Source Pharma Foundation's initial projects include India's first Product Development Partnership (PDP), led by Dr Tanjore Balganes, the former head of Astra Zeneca India, and will focus on the rapid development of breakthrough medicines, including renewed efforts to develop effective therapies to roll back the tuberculosis epidemic, which kills nearly 1.5 million patients a year, making it the most lethal infectious disease globally after HIV/AIDS. P Other activities include public outreach, education initiatives including open source research fellowships, and global crowdsourced science. Advisory Board members include Bernard Munos (FasterCures/Forbes blogger), Matthew Todd (The University of Sydney/Founder of Open Source Malaria).

Ganesh Neelam, Development Manager, Tata Trusts said, "Tata Trusts shares the vision to deliver affordable medicines for patients across the world and especially in developing countries. We are confident that within five years, our co-partnership with the Open Source Pharma Foundation will enable innovative breakthroughs in cost effectively treating the most pressing diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria. We have been one of the first supporters of this initiative and are fully committed to making a real difference in this area."

Tata Trusts are amongst India's oldest, non-sectarian philanthropic organisations. Tata Trusts seek to be catalysts in development through giving grants to institutions in the areas of Natural Resources Management, Rural Livelihoods, Urban Livelihoods & Poverty, Education, Enhancing Civil Society and Governance, Health, and Media Arts, Crafts and Culture.

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## Creation of “Linux for Drugs” gets support from Tata Trusts

<http://spicyip.com/2015/09/creation-of-linux-for-drugs-gets-support-from-tata-trusts.html>

In what could turn out to be quite a significant development for pharma innovation combined with affordable medicines, Tata Trusts have announced that they will support the creation of the Open Source Pharmaceutical Foundation (OSPF), with operations commencing later this year, under the leadership of Mr Jaykumar Menon, Dr Tanjore Balganes, Mr Bernard Munos and Dr Mathew Todd. As described, "OSPF seeks to support an alternative comprehensive, open source pharmaceutical innovation model driven by principles of openness, patient needs, and affordability." They go on to describe it as: In four words, Open Source Pharma is "affordable medicine for all." In three words: "Linux for drugs."

The Open Source approach to drug development is a model of pharmaceutical innovation that focuses on a collaborative approach to tackle problems of drug development, while also keeping costs low for patients. As our readers may remember, I recently wrote about how the fiasco around Martin Schkreli (the ex hedge fund manager who raised prices of a 62 year old drug by 5500%) was but a symptom of the larger malaise of costs and pricing in the pharmaceutical world. This Open Source approach to drug development is certainly one that seems like it could at least partially ameliorate the problem. Amongst other things, it helps reduce R&D costs, it allows drug development to focus on non-profitable sectors/diseases as well, and it encourages 'openness' and thus more follow on research. While clinical trials, which often are very expensive and add to the cost of the drug, would still need to be done, the press release interestingly mentions "IT-enabled clinical trials with open data" as another factor that would reduce costs.

As our readers may remember, the Government of India, through the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) also runs a similar programme known as the Open Source Drug Discovery (OSDD) programme. We've run a number of blog posts on it, though our last post seems to have been on a bureaucratic barrier that had paused its funding. Hopefully though, with the Government making the right noises about Openness in the international forum (See: The Path to Innovation is Open Models and not IP: India at WTO Trips Council), these types of barriers don't pop up too often. I'm also curious to see how/if the OSDD and the newly formed OSPF will interact with each other. It's also worth noting at this point, that the Tata Trusts have also been supportive of the OSDD program through their Tata CSIR OSDD Fellowship programs. A big round of applause to the Tata Trusts from me for sure!

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