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Academic Technology Transfer in the Middle East: A Focus on Open Innovation

Over the past two decades, biomedical knowledge has grown exponentially, giving us completely new insights into how life works. Astonishing advances in genomics, bioinformatics, imaging and stem cell medicine are offering up possibilities that were unimaginable just a few years ago. New tools that will allow us not only to heal disease but to also predict it and prevent it are finally within our reach. This is more than just a revolution in science and health care; it is a revolution in the human condition. However, because of regional and international economic changes and uncertainties, core systemic financial support for basic research is decreasing or becoming more competitive to obtain, especially for younger researchers at a time when the pace of biomedical innovation and its concurrent translational development and adoption should be increasing to address unmet health care needs. What can we do in view of this new (fiscal) reality? Expertise, experience, resources, and technology must be cross-linked in entirely new ways to establish even more efficient and effective collaborative public-private partnerships to accelerate the advancement of biomedical science. The adoption of “open innovation” programs and platforms could be an important step in attaining this goal, while such an initiative would be especially useful in the MENA Region given its unique characteristics. The benefits and various key challenges of adopting an “open innovation” project in an academic medical center setting will be discussed in this presentation.

Biography

Mark G Bloom is the Director of the Office of Technology Transfer and is responsible for leading the long-term growth of Sidra's technology transfer program. In addition to the traditional duties of overseeing Sidra's intellectual property rights portfolio, he is responsible for developing technology transfer and intellectual property rights management strategies that support Sidra's mission to become a world-class academic health center focusing on women's and children's health. Sidra expects to become a regional leader in moving innovation and research to the commercial marketplace and is looking to its Office of Technology Transfer to play a leading role in realizing that goal.

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