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Biotech IP: promise and pitfall

Biotech know-how has become more and more key to value-creation in the healthcare sector. A glance at the number of patents filed by pharmaceutical and biotech enterprises provides evidence enough that biotech know-how is playing an increasingly important role in filling up development pipelines in the pharmaceutical industry, especially in the areas of oncological, cardiovascular, and immunological indications. In 2007, 2% of all US patents contained the term "nucleic acid", as did 4% of the patents for pharmaceuticals. In this "Special on intellectual property" (p. 34-41), EuroBiotechNews reports on current EPO and USPTO decisions that are important for the biopharmaceutical sector (p. 36-38), as well as on the growing need for secure ways to transfer sensitive information to third parties (p. 40-41).

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