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The Global Location of Biopharmaceutical Knowledge Activity: New Findings, New Questions

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Executive Summary

Location possibilities for biopharmaceutical firms are expanding, driven by factors such as falling natural and political barriers to trade and communication, extension and strengthening of patent protection through institutions including the World Trade Organization, and growing supplies of skilled labor and related infrastructure in large, relatively low-cost countries. This paper examines the causes and consequences of this global expansion of knowledge discovery by biopharmaceutical firms. We first discuss the empirical evidence on the extent and nature of this process. We then examine whether this global spread of biopharmaceutical R&D supports or hurts host country knowledge activity. We conclude that foreign knowledge discovery by biopharmaceutical companies tends to complement, not substitute for, home country activities, and we therefore anticipate no significant reduction in U.S. R&D employment or expenditure in this sector due to “globalization” per se. The same cannot be said for policy choices in areas such as tax and immigration, which may have a substantial impact on location of R&D activity.

I. Introduction

Location possibilities for biopharmaceutical firms are expanding, driven by factors such as falling natural and political barriers to trade and communication, extension and strengthening of patent protection through institutions including the World Trade Organization (WTO), and growing supplies of skilled labor and related infrastructure in large, relatively low-cost countries. Issues of activity location are increasingly central to the performance not just of biopharmaceutical companies, but of their suppliers, customers, and host countries as well. While the principle of comparative advantage creates a strong presumption that global reallocation of activity in response to changing economic conditions serves all countries’ interests, “offshoring” and “outsourcing” have become

highly controversial issues. As the following quote from the *New York Times* demonstrates, increasing attention is being paid to the biopharmaceutical sector, where anecdotal evidence suggests that the outsourcing of economic activity seen in manufacturing, information technology, and business services is now accelerating in an industry in which U.S.-based companies have been global leaders in R&D and economic performance: “The exporting of jobs is now spreading to a crown jewel of corporate America: the medical and drug industries. ... It could be a worrisome sign. The life sciences industry, with its largely white-collar work force and its heavy reliance on scientific innovation, was long thought to be less vulnerable to the outsourcing trend. The industry, moreover, is viewed as an economic growth engine and the source of new jobs, particularly as growth slows in other sectors like information technology” (Andrew Pollack, “Medical Companies Join Offshoring Trend, Too,” *New York Times*, February 24, 2005).

There is rising concern that global engagement by biopharmaceutical companies harms domestic workers and the overall economy—much as there has been concern about the home country impacts of foreign expansion of other industries such as manufacturing and information technology. This paper addresses two central questions for this debate: first, what is currently known about the nature and extent of global expansion of knowledge discovery by biopharmaceutical companies, and second, is this expansion a substitute for or complement to home country activity; on net, are U.S. R&D jobs being exported or created by this phenomenon?

We begin by presenting some empirical evidence on historical trends in various measures of the geographical allocation of R&D effort in the biopharmaceutical industry. Key indicators of R&D activity, such as R&D spending, patent applications, and operation of clinical trial sites, all show a similar story: against a background of steadily increasing overall global R&D effort, the United States and other traditional locations of R&D activity retain a dominant share, with “new” locations growing rapidly, but from a very small base. These findings are consistent with research on the underlying economic drivers of the location of pharmaceutical R&D, which have found an important role for agglomeration externalities, proximity to publicly funded science, and related effects in drug discovery. It is also clear that company location decisions are shaped by a broad range of government policy choices such as reimbursement policies and price controls, basic and scientific education, tax provisions, R&D support, patent policies, safety review processes, manufacturing-siting regulations, and environmental concerns, though

little is known about the magnitude of the impact of policy choices in these areas or the time scale over which they work.

We then move on to discussing whether this global spread of biopharmaceutical R&D supports or hurts host country knowledge activity. Growth of technological capabilities and research infrastructure in low-cost locations abroad may induce a company to expand its R&D activity in those countries, but the impact on domestic R&D employment or expenditure is ambiguous: demand for U.S. R&D workers may rise or fall. This will depend on whether hiring more foreign knowledge workers by a global biopharmaceutical company will make that company want to hire more or fewer such workers in the United States (and thus, in the jargon of economics, will depend on whether foreign workers are price complements to or substitutes for U.S. workers). It will also depend on the effect of geographical expansion or contraction of the firm's activity on its overall scope and scale. Overall, the evidence suggests that in biopharmaceuticals, as in many other sectors, overseas expansion is generally a complement to rather than a substitute for U.S. employment and investment, and the globalization of R&D is therefore unlikely to cause a significant reduction in U.S. R&D spending or employment of highly skilled workers. We conclude with a brief discussion of the likely impact of policy changes such as tax treatment of foreign earnings and immigration policy with respect to skilled workers.

II. Globalization of Biopharmaceutical Research and Development

The pharmaceutical industry has historically been dominated by multinational companies that engage in significant business activity in many countries and whose products are distributed and marketed worldwide. While many companies have operated labs and other research facilities in multiple countries, R&D activity has been largely concentrated in the United States, Europe, and Japan. The transformation of the global economy in recent decades, and in particular the rapid industrialization and changing business environment of many countries, suggest that new opportunities have emerged for these companies to conduct R&D in locations with lower costs or opportunities to tap into new sources of human capital. At the same time, new competitors are springing up in these new locations. Companies in countries such as India have grown beyond their roots in manufacturing for their domestic market to become global suppliers of generic drugs and have become increasingly interested in developing their own new branded products.

The extent to which the global allocation of R&D is changing in response to these forces, and its impact on the U.S. domestic industry, are not easy to assess. For 2008, members of the U.S. trade association for R&D-based biopharmaceutical companies (PhRMA) reported spending almost \$12 billion on R&D outside the United States, an almost three-fold increase since 2000. But it is easy to misinterpret these figures.

Figure 1 provides some historical perspective: increases in the amount of expenditure are largely driven by increases in the total, which more than doubled in nominal terms between 1998 and 2008. It is particularly noteworthy that R&D expenditure abroad has been a roughly constant 20% share of total R&D since the early 1980s: the growth in “offshore” R&D spending has largely just kept pace with growth in domestic spending. The increase in the “abroad” share from 18% to 23.5% since 2000 does, however, suggest some significant geographic reallocation.

Is this a real phenomenon, as opposed to an artifact of particular data sources, and how large is its economic impact? Unfortunately, comprehensive, internationally comparable data on R&D spending or employment of R&D workers in the biopharmaceutical sector collected by government agencies are not available for many countries or are difficult to interpret. While individual companies and national or regional trade associations occasionally report R&D expenditures broken out on a geographical basis, these data are not always transparently collected or easy to compare across different sources. Other indicators of R&D activity

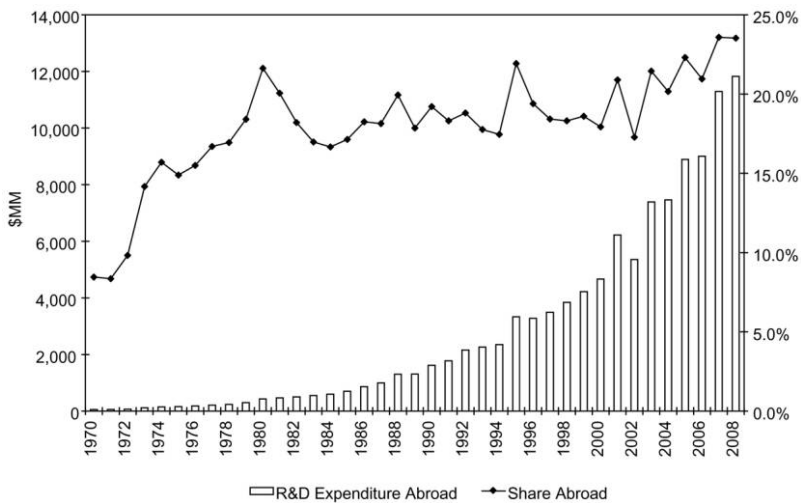


Fig. 1. U.S. PhRMA members' R&D spending abroad. Source: PhRMA *Industry Profile*, various years.

such as patent filings or operation of clinical trial sites that are collected consistently across countries can therefore provide a useful window. We summarize below the evidence from these sources on changing geographical allocation of R&D. Interestingly, there is little evidence of large shifts—to date—in the global allocation of biopharmaceutical R&D away from its traditional locations. Rather, various indicators point to a very small share of current global R&D activity taking place in “new” locations. The volume of activity in new locations is growing rapidly, but from a very small base that makes it hard to forecast future developments: if this growth continues uninterrupted at the same pace for the next decade, there would certainly be a substantial fall in the share (and potentially the volume) of traditional locations. On the other hand, very high growth rates are rarely sustainable over the long term, and the share of new locations may quickly “top out.”

Table 1 shows the geographic allocation of private-sector R&D spending based on data compiled by the Organization for Economic Cooperation

Table 1
Business Expenditure on Pharmaceutical R&D by Country

	1990	1995	2000	2004
Total business expenditure on R&D at purchasing power parity (current \$millions), of which:	16,853	24,587	33,781	46,216
United States	37.3%	41.5%	38.3%	36.5%
EU-15	39.8%	36.3%	40.4%	39.0%
United Kingdom	12.1%	11.8%	13.3%	11.1%
France	6.4%	8.5%	7.8%	7.6%
Germany	8.1%	5.0%	6.7%	7.5%
Italy	5.5%	2.5%	1.9%	1.5%
Sweden	2.1%	2.7%	3.7%	3.6%
Japan	16.2%	14.9%	14.3%	14.8%
Other developed countries*	6.7%	6.3%	5.8%	8.0%
“New Europe”†		.8%	.9%	1.2%
Other emerging economies‡		.1%	.4%	.6%

Source: OECD Main Science and Technology Indicators, vol. 2006, release 02, and UK Pharmaceutical Industry Competitiveness Task Force: Competitiveness and Performance Indicators 2005.

Note: In 2004, data for Australia, France, Greece, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, and Turkey are inferred from 2003 values and the annual average growth rate of the business enterprise sector R&D expenditure over the past 5 years in that country. In 2003, data for Austria, Denmark, Greece, and Iceland are inferred from adjacent year values and the 5-year annual average growth rate of the business enterprise sector R&D expenditure in that country. The same applies to Austria in 1990 and 1995 and Belgium in 1990. Data for Switzerland may not be consistent over time.

*Australia, Canada, Iceland, Korea, Norway, Singapore, and Switzerland.

†Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia.

‡Taiwan, Mexico, and Turkey.

and Development (OECD) from national statistical agencies. As shown in the table, the U.S. share of total private-sector pharmaceutical R&D measured by the OECD fell from 41.5% to 36.5% between 1995 and 2004. But this largely reflects relative gains by European and other developed countries rather than a shift to emerging markets: the European Union–15 countries' share of the OECD total rose from 36.3% to 39.0% over the same period. (Notice also that these shifts were preceded by a period in which the United States gained share against the European countries.) While the share of "New Europe" and other emerging middle-income economies such as Mexico and Turkey grew dramatically between 1995 and 2004, this was from a very small base and accounted for less than 2% of total pharmaceutical R&D expenditure in the OECD database.

Other indicators of research effort present a very similar story. Table 2 shows the volume of U.S. patent applications for biopharmaceuticals (international patent class A61K) broken down by the country of the patent assignee.¹ Patent applications can be a useful indicator of "discovery" or preclinical research activity, though unfortunately lags in the patent examination process and in the publishing of pending applications make it difficult to observe activity in the most recent years.

Note that these are applications at the U.S. Patent Office. While the United States is the largest and most attractive national market, and

Table 2

Location of Assignees of Biopharmaceutical Patents Filed in the United States: Percentage Share in Global Total

	Application Date										Total
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
Africa	.01	.05	.05	.04	.04	.03	.02	.03			.03
Asia	9.93	9.88	9.82	10.70	11.51	11.60	10.00	8.47	8.27	6.93	10.20
China	.10	.12	.10	.20	.40	.50	.42	.32	.31	.36	.27
India	.36	.38	.50	.75	.95	1.23	1.34	.94	.85	.72	.79
Caribbean	.15	.18	.38	.68	.47	.34	.46	1.08	.22	.63	.43
EU-15	23.70	22.90	24.10	23.40	24.10	22.80	20.50	19.00	18.10	17.60	22.60
Eastern Europe	.40	.38	.17	.39	.44	.26	.41	.48	.22	.45	.35
Latin America	.04	.05	.15	.17	.14	.17	.18	.22	.09	.36	.14
Middle East	1.05	.93	1.06	1.38	1.15	.93	.99	1.21	1.30	1.35	1.10
Other OECD	5.54	6.09	6.83	6.71	7.17	7.68	6.72	6.37	5.50	6.57	6.65
United States	59.20	59.50	57.50	56.50	54.90	56.20	60.70	63.10	66.30	66.10	58.40
Total number of patent applications	6,755	6,531	7,853	8,421	8,558	7,629	5,431	3,718	2,237	1,111	58,244

Source: Authors' calculations from U.S. Patent Office data.

Note: Table entries are based on counts of patents classified in international patent class A61K, by country of the assignee and application date at the U.S. Patent Office.

therefore patent protection is likely to be sought there for most significant inventions regardless of national origin, these data may underweight activity outside the United States. Table 3 presents similar data on Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) filings at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), a transnational agency that accepts “placeholder” applications for patents that may be later sought in a very wide range of countries. Here applications are broken down by the priority date of the invention and the country where they originated.

Table 4 presents a third cut of the patent data. Here the table entries are the share of each region in “inventorships,” that is, the number of distinct instances of an individual appearing as a listed inventor on a U.S. patent.

Tables 2–4 are very much alike and illustrate the global dominance of the United States in drug discovery activity: U.S.-based assignees and inventors are responsible for about half of global patenting, with the EU-15 countries making up a further 25%–30% of the total in any given year. Only in the PCT applications (table 3) is there any suggestion that the United States is losing ground: here the share of the United States has fallen quite substantially since the late 1990s, largely accounted for by the growth of PCT filings originating in Asia. (Note that China and India are small components of total activity: the Asia category is dominated by

Table 3
Biopharmaceutical PCT Applications by Priority Date and Country of Origination:
Percentage Share in Global Total

	Application Date										
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Africa	.09	.12	.12	.06	.15	.14	.10	.12	.17	.09	.07
Asia	7.89	7.43	11.41	15.11	11.34	13.04	13.72	15.76	15.82	14.88	14.64
China	.25	.21	2.87	5.51	.80	1.05	1.25	1.44	1.48	1.84	1.97
India	.02	.11	.49	.39	.61	1.10	1.52	1.84	2.00	1.93	1.59
Caribbean	.16	.19	.22	.33	.26	.52	.48	.31	.36	.45	.41
EU-15	28.03	28.89	27.99	28.26	30.99	29.04	26.69	26.97	28.70	28.20	27.34
Eastern Europe	.44	.40	.58	.61	.56	.78	.84	1.04	1.03	1.15	1.41
Latin America	.12	.07	.18	.19	.26	.37	.40	.38	.34	.47	.64
Middle East	1.40	1.19	1.24	1.10	1.58	1.48	1.84	1.55	1.90	1.80	1.81
Other OECD	7.58	7.72	8.19	7.94	9.60	9.47	9.01	10.02	11.36	11.35	13.00
United States	54.30	54.01	50.07	46.39	45.25	45.15	46.93	43.85	40.33	41.62	40.67
Total											
applications	6,429	7,488	9,010	10,904	10,615	10,579	11,314	13,615	15,073	14,953	11,092

Source: Authors’ calculations from WIPO PatentScope database.

Note: Table entries are based on the count of PCT filings in international patent class A61K broken out by the county of origination of the application and the date the application was received.

Table 4

Location of Inventors on U.S. Biopharmaceutical Patents: Percentage Share in Global Total

	Application Date										Total
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
Africa	.05	.05	.07	.05	.03	.02	.02	.07	.02	.02	.04
Asia	13.25	12.53	12.25	12.89	13.11	13.74	11.83	10.60	9.02	9.20	12.45
China	.12	.22	.21	.24	.49	.64	.57	.38	.43	.54	.37
India	.55	.60	.63	1.18	1.13	1.60	2.17	1.70	.82	1.28	1.15
Caribbean	.07	.07	.11	.14	.05	.13	.02	.06	.01	.04	.08
EU-15	25.88	25.98	26.87	25.52	27.37	25.14	23.21	21.56	22.37	21.99	25.28
Eastern Europe	.92	1.22	.98	.80	.93	.74	.77	.91	.63	1.12	.90
Latin America	.15	.13	.25	.38	.27	.19	.37	.21	.17	.54	.25
Middle East	.80	.89	.93	1.11	1.08	.74	.74	.99	1.25	1.01	.93
Other OECD	6.12	6.43	6.74	6.20	6.46	7.24	7.07	7.35	6.28	7.41	6.66
United States	52.75	52.71	51.82	52.92	50.70	52.06	55.96	58.25	60.24	58.67	53.41
Total											
inventors	22,177	21,287	25,814	28,583	29,906	27,438	20,524	14,098	8,580	4,466	

Source: Authors' calculations from U.S. Patent Office data.

Note: Table entries are based on counts of patents classified in international patent class A61K, by country of the inventor and application date at the U.S. Patent Office. A single patent may have multiple inventors in multiple countries, leading to a higher count of "inventorships" than patent applications.

Japan, with about 10% of global biopharmaceutical patents.) PCT filings present a wider picture of global patenting activity, but we should be cautious in interpreting these data: not all applications will mature into issued patents that meet standards of patentability in the United States or Europe, and some of these inventions may be products or technologies that have limited relevance for the U.S.-based industry that is focused on creating new products that meet stringent standards for safety and efficacy.

Table 5 presents some evidence on the challenging allocation of research at a different point in the drug development process: clinical trials. As documented by Berndt et al. (2009), clinical trials are the largest single component of pharmaceutical R&D and are increasingly global in nature, with a single trial enrolling patients in as many as several hundred distinct sites spread across multiple countries. As the industry has moved toward a standard practice of publishing trial protocols in open registries, the number and location of these sites have become visible, providing another useful window into the location of research activity. Table 5 breaks down trial sites by region and the start date of each trial for more than 11,000 industry-sponsored clinical trials of drugs and biologics.

Table 5

Phase II–III Industry-Sponsored Biopharmaceutical Clinical Sites: Percentage Share of Clinical Sites

Region	Time Period						Total 2003–8	ARAGR* 2003–8
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008		
North America	61.2%	60.4%	57.0%	51.9%	50.2%	50.7%	54.2%	–3.7%
Western Europe	22.5	24.3	24.2	22.9	23.1	22.9	23.0	.3
Oceania (including Japan)	3.1	3.1	3.2	4.4	4.8	4.3	4.0	6.7
Total traditional	86.8	87.7	84.3	79.2	78.2	77.9	81.4	–2.1
Africa/Middle East	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.6
Asia (excluding Japan)	2.1	2.0	3.4	4.2	5.0	5.0	3.9	16.8
Eastern Europe	6.2	6.1	7.3	10.0	10.5	10.6	8.9	10.7
Latin America	3.4	2.5	3.3	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.1	7.1
Total emerging	13.2	12.3	15.7	20.8	21.8	22.1	18.6	10.2
Global total sites	25,313	30,973	33,546	54,018	49,005	44,003	236,858	

Source: Berndt et al. (2009) and authors' calculations from data extracted from <http://clinicaltrials.gov>.

Note: Table entries are based on counts of clinical trial sites, tabulated by the region in which sites are located and the start date of each trial.

*ARAGR is the annual average growth rate of each region.

As with indicators of preclinical R&D activity, the United States dominates global activity in clinical trials, accounting for more than half of all sites.² By this measure, the “traditional” regions (United States, Europe, and Japan) together account for 80% of global clinical research. Note, however, that the share of the emerging regions has grown substantially. Over the 5 years 2003–8, the traditional regions' share in activity fell at about 2% per year, whereas the emerging regions' share in activity grew at about 10% per year. Much of the expansion in activity outside the traditional locations has occurred in Eastern European countries and Asia.

What explains these observations? Research in management and economics has identified a number of factors that may affect R&D location decisions. In many respects, R&D may be easier than some business activities to move across different locations. However, location decisions reflect complex trade-offs. On the one hand, R&D is increasingly less tightly bound to other functions of the firm. Pharmaceutical companies have always been able to operate R&D facilities largely independently from other functions: though a typical large pharmaceutical firm operates as an integrated economic entity, it normally conducts R&D in multiple locations around the world. The nature of the product development process, along with historically strong intellectual property rights and relatively straightforward licensing practices, has allowed pharmaceutical companies to “decouple” manufacturing and marketing from R&D. This has been the case for many decades, but increased vertical disintegration

in R&D activities since the mid-1980s has further relaxed organizational constraints on the location of research activity, permitting extensive geographic reorganization of R&D across countries and regions as well as vertical reorganization within firms. In the United States, for example, "upstream" firms specializing in new technologies for drug discovery are now often located in different locations (such as Boston and the San Francisco Bay area) than those historically used by the "big pharma" firms concentrated in Philadelphia, New Jersey, Connecticut, and the Midwest.

Yet other considerations suggest that firms are not free to relocate. Economies of scale and scope in performing R&D, the presence of internal knowledge spillovers, and costs of coordinating activity across dispersed units suggest that, all else equal, firms should limit geographic dispersion of R&D. Furthermore, while some locations may be more intrinsically economically attractive because of lower costs, access to government subsidies, or favorable tax treatment of R&D, these factors may be dominated by the benefits conveyed by proximity to centers of academic excellence and other forms of noncommercial research. Colocation with academic science or a "cluster" of producers of complementary technologies also appears to raise research productivity (see Furman et al., forthcoming). Note also that these economic factors tending to concentrate R&D are offset by political considerations. In some countries, pharmaceutical companies face strong political pressure to maintain domestic R&D. Some countries, such as the United Kingdom, have explicitly linked the stringency of price regulation to local R&D spending levels; in other cases, such as Canada, local R&D spending reflects a political bargain to avoid compulsory licensing.

Historically, the United States has been perceived by the industry as a very attractive location for pharmaceutical R&D because of its very limited use of price regulation and government purchasing and strong patent rights. In contrast, in the late 1990s, EU governments became very concerned that overly aggressive price controls and hard bargaining by state purchasers were driving away investment in pharmaceutical R&D and adversely affecting the competitiveness of EU-based companies, though there is little evidence (see table 1 above) of any major shift in R&D spending away from Europe. Episodes such as Canada's experience with compulsory licensing of pharmaceuticals in the 1970s and 1980s, or more recent examples such as the periodic heated disputes between OECD-based companies and governments of developing countries over pricing of antiretroviral drugs, suggest that R&D location decisions can be quite sensitive to government policies directed at lowering

the cost of acquiring pharmaceuticals. Notwithstanding its long tradition of excellence in medical and pharmaceutical research and substantial historical investments by multinational drug companies, Canada experienced a steep decline in domestic R&D activity in pharmaceuticals when it introduced its compulsory licensing regime. Only when full patent rights were restored and a relatively loose drug price regulation scheme was instituted did commercial R&D spending return to previous levels. Countries such as Australia, which have relatively stringent drug price controls, continue to face major challenges in attracting significant R&D investment by multinational drug companies, in spite of strong academic research capabilities, an attractive business environment, and substantial public support of commercial biomedical research.

Beyond these “price” drivers, several other factors have been identified as influencing R&D location decisions. These often work through indirect, or unpriced, effects such as knowledge spillovers that are conveyed by scientific and professional publications, geographic proximity, or communication through informal professional networks rather than through economic transactions. For example, drug discovery lab sites tend to specialize in therapeutic areas or scientific disciplines, and since proximity to publicly funded science appears to be an important determinant of research productivity, these often reflect local academic centers of excellence in particular fields. Furman et al. (forthcoming) show that patenting by pharmaceutical companies is positively correlated with the volume of academic publications by “local” public-sector scientists. The very substantial levels of publicly funded biomedical research in the United States, the United Kingdom, and some other countries have therefore played an important role in sustaining similarly high levels of commercial investment in drug discovery in these countries.

More generally, like other knowledge-intensive activities, discovery research appears to display substantial agglomeration externalities. Drug discovery activity tends to “cluster” in a small number of locations around the world: many major discovery labs are located in the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut standard metropolitan statistical area, Boston, the San Francisco Bay area, the suburbs of Philadelphia, Research Triangle in North Carolina, the Rhine Valley, the suburbs of London, Stockholm, and Tokyo/Kansei. These are conspicuously not low-cost locations, so this clustering suggests substantial offsetting economic benefits derived from being colocated with other firms. Beyond the role of localized knowledge spillovers, benefits from collocation with other pharmaceutical firms include access to skilled labor and “infrastructure”

in the form of specialized services and suppliers and efficient interaction with collaboration partners.

A final factor that may affect R&D location decisions is the strength of intellectual property (IP) protection. Though there is no obvious connection between the degree of patent protection in the local product market and the productivity of R&D conducted in any given country, the nature of a country's IP regime appears to affect multinationals' willingness to conduct R&D activities there. The reason may be that weak patent protection for products often correlates with weak legal protection of other forms of IP such as trade secrets and associated contractual agreements with employees and suppliers, and limited avenues to enforce these rights. Both patent and nonpatent protection of IP play an important role in maintaining exclusive access to, and control over, proprietary knowledge, and in countries with weak IP, companies may have well-founded concerns about "leakage" of valuable information to local competitors. Zhao (2006) argues that weak IP regimes need not deter R&D investment by multinationals: in the absence of strong IP rights, companies can nonetheless develop alternative mechanisms for realizing returns on innovation and IP. These mechanisms include rapid "internalization" of knowledge through efficient internal organizational processes and control of complementary assets, and they may make it possible to profitably exploit low prices of R&D inputs and underutilized domestic innovation capabilities. However, this argument is most appealing for technologies that have a substantial tacit component, are strongly complementary to other protected assets held by the firm, and have rapid development cycles. This is not the case for pharmaceutical R&D, where results from R&D are often easy to "externalize" and imitate, and product life cycles are measured in decades.

Not surprisingly, therefore, R&D activity in pharmaceuticals has historically been concentrated in countries with strong and enforceable IP and has only just begun to grow in countries that have recently adopted OECD-style patent systems under the provisions of the TRIPS agreement (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights). Compliance with TRIPS requires all WTO members to (ultimately) adopt key features of the patent systems of wealthy industrialized countries, such as a 20-year term, nondiscrimination across fields of technology and nationality of applicants, and effective enforcement procedures. Strong patent protection for pharmaceuticals is controversial in many of these countries (see discussion of India in Cockburn [2008]), and the degree to which domestic political pressures will limit the enforceability of patents or push the limits of the TRIPS agreement by, for example, instituting

compulsory licensing of drugs remains to be seen. Patent rights obtained by multinationals in countries such as India give these companies the ability to exclude generics and set prices above marginal cost. But patents also provide protection for domestic firms conducting R&D, and political choices to weaken or limit patent protection on the products of multinationals may have serious consequences for nascent research sectors in these economies.

An ongoing NBER project is investigating a number of additional aspects of the economics of location of biopharmaceuticals. We now briefly describe some key findings.

Thursby and Thursby (2008) provide direct survey evidence on managers' motivations to globalize R&D activity. Asked to rate the importance of a variety of factors influencing location choice, R&D managers in this sample rated IP protection, access to qualified research personnel, and opportunities to collaborate with local universities much more highly than cost advantages or absence of regulatory restrictions.

Arora, Branstetter, and Chatterjee (2008) focus on the development of the Indian pharmaceutical industry and in particular the impact of the dramatic shift in India's patent policy following the TRIPS agreement. Analysis of the market valuation of Indian pharmaceutical companies as the TRIPS reforms began to "bite" shows a very strong effect of patent reform. Domestic firms that had developed internal research capabilities and had external collaborative linkages to other (multinational) research-intensive firms saw a very substantial increase in stock market valuation, whereas those with limited accumulated R&D investment or an inward-focused business model paid a penalty. Host country policies thus play an important role in shaping the global R&D decisions of companies.

Koenig and MacGarvie (2008) examine the relationship between cross-country differences in drug price regulation and the location of biopharmaceutical foreign direct investment (FDI) in 27 European countries. In Europe, a complex set of national drug price regulation and government procurement policies stands in contrast to the "single-market" framework put in place by the European Union to promote free movement of goods and services. Using a sample of 619 investments in manufacturing, distribution, and R&D to estimate parameters of a location choice model, the authors find that policies such as reference pricing have a negative effect on the probability of attracting R&D investments, though the impact of such policies on location of manufacturing, distribution, and marketing assets is less clear.

Fabrizio and Thomas (2008) examine the importance of “local” knowledge, specifically, knowledge about the structure of demand, as a driver of R&D decisions. They find that the number of new drugs introduced in a country is strongly affected by the producer’s degree of knowledge/experience in the local market, as opposed to more general knowledge from experience in foreign markets, above and beyond the effect of its local technological expertise.

Argyres, Brueggemann, and Furman (2008) focus on the impact of cross-border mergers and acquisitions on R&D choices. Mergers are important mechanisms for accessing the “knowledge capital” or R&D capabilities of competitors or partners. Contrary to earlier work that appeared to show that merger activity results in a scaling back of R&D, in this paper merger and acquisition activity is found to result in higher levels of collaboration and an increase in innovative output in some of the labs of acquired firms.

Alcacer, Cantwell, and Gittelman (2008) study another aspect of such “markets for technology,” licensing agreements reached between small upstream biotech firms and downstream pharmaceutical companies. Their analysis of a very large sample of such agreements points to a global market for technology, supported by contractual agreements and organizational capabilities that allow efficient arm’s-length transfer of technology. Fully 80% of the agreements in their sample were between entities in different countries, and they find relatively little evidence of geographical constraints on information gathering, costs of search for licensing partners, or postagreement collaborative activity.

This new research both supports some existing ideas and points to the complexity of the phenomenon. One clear common theme emerging from these studies is that the global allocation of R&D expenditure, though quite “sticky,” may also be sensitive over the long run to aspects of the policy environment (IP rules, competition policy, price regulation, etc.). Importantly, the “big bucks” continue to be spent by multinational companies, which respond to changes in the overall international policy environment, rather than just domestic considerations.

III. Host Country Evidence on the Globalization of Knowledge Creation: Are Good Jobs at Good Wages Being Exported?

As Section II of this paper has documented, biopharmaceutical companies are increasingly spreading around the world their various knowledge discovery efforts. An increasingly pressing question this raises is the home country impact of this global engagement. Recall the quote

from Section I and the question it poses of whether biopharmaceutical companies are exporting abroad their key knowledge creation and related activities. Critics contend that multinational companies—in biopharmaceuticals and many other industries as well—have abandoned the United States and other host countries and that policy needs to rebalance their domestic and international operations. Such charges have been leveled for many years, with the accusations of the 2004 U.S. presidential campaign of “Benedict Arnold” chief executive officers exporting jobs persisting to today where the deep recession has boosted fears about good jobs at good wages.

This section addresses the empirical evidence on how expansion abroad by multinational companies affects their home country activities. First, it will review the international trade literature on globalization and innovation. Next, it will first examine this question from the broad perspective of the theory and empirical evidence of multinational companies in all industries. Finally, it will then turn to what (limited) evidence exists for answering this question specifically for biopharmaceutical companies.

A. Theoretical Perspective on Globalization and Innovation

The benchmark Heckscher-Ohlin trade theory has guided much of the research in international trade for decades. But this benchmark is lacking in two important respects: the assumed exogeneity both of national factor endowments and of production technologies.

There is now a substantial theoretical framework in international trade on the channels by which globalization shapes the incentives of a country’s firms to innovate. Central to this work has been formalizing the choice of forward-looking, profit-maximizing firms to invest in R&D—versus the Heckscher-Ohlin assumption of exogenous technological progress. Attention has been paid to the fact that outputs of innovation efforts, that is, new technologies, are typically nonrival and at least partially nonexcludable and can be either specific or general in terms of their applicability. These features all inform the innovation efforts chosen by firms, such that observed R&D spending is an equilibrium outcome. At the same time, much of this work has embedded the innovation choice into Heckscher-Ohlin general equilibrium foundations, such that the new focus on the dynamics of factor accumulation and discovery efforts can augment traditional emphases such as the pattern of specialization and returns to factors of production.

Much of the seminal work on innovation and globalization was done by Grossman and Helpman (1991). There are two main implications of their and related work: (1) there are multiple dimensions of global engagement for a country and its firms, and (2) different channels of global engagement can have different impacts on incentives for innovation efforts—contrary to much of the popular discussion that presumes that many, if not all, channels reduce the incentives for R&D in advanced countries such as the United States.

One important dimension of globalization and innovation is the greater ability to exchange information across borders: through market transactions of customers and suppliers and the related process of industrial learning, and also through nonmarket channels as well. The recent explosion of connectivity thanks to the Internet and related technologies is a vivid example of this. In theory, international information exchange can boost innovation efforts in all countries by reducing their cost of research: R&D scientists can be more productive because of their access to larger stocks of existing ideas. The extent of this boost for each country, however, depends crucially both on the degree to which pools of knowledge are global rather than national and on the country's research history. For a country such as the United States that has a long history and institutions of R&D activity, with less-than-global pools of knowledge—for example, if there are large benefits of geographic proximity of researchers—comparative advantage in innovation will be more likely to continue. For countries without such institutions and history, hysteresis may impede greater innovation.

A second link from greater global engagement to greater innovation effort can be the pressure of international competition through freer trade and/or FDI. Trade and FDI tend to make product markets more competitive, which in turn can force researchers to increase effort—in particular, to avoid duplicating innovations created abroad and thus facing smaller returns on those innovations. Integration of product markets can thus spur innovation efforts to seek those larger and hopefully higher-return market opportunities.

Consistent with many of the current business policy concerns, however, through other channels the incentives of a country's firms to innovate can be dampened by greater global engagement. One such channel is national factor markets. All dimensions of globalization—trade, FDI, immigration, and so forth—can alter a country's returns to its factors of production. This, in turn, can alter the costs of innovation effort. If globalization raises the returns to a country's skilled workers, then its innovating firms face higher costs (more expensive knowledge workers).

This possibility resonates with many U.S. anecdotes today, where, against the backdrop of rising returns to skills in the U.S. labor market since the late 1970s, many companies are today arguing that (quality-adjusted) costs of R&D are substantially lower in newly integrating countries such as China and India. In turn, these relative costs of R&D activity are ultimately determined in part by national relative supplies of these skilled workers—again, a point that resonates with discussion of international differences in tertiary graduation rates. Thus, comparative advantage in innovation can evolve dynamically, with no guarantee against country switches.

Another dimension of globalization and innovation with ambiguous impacts on a country's innovation activity is the spread of global production networks, especially those within multinational firms. If multinationals are important vehicles by which ideas transfer across borders, then the expansion of international production mediated by multinationals can entail the expansion of innovation capacity as well. In theory, firms in the FDI-host country (which may in fact be affiliates of the multinationals headquartered in the FDI-sending country) may start innovating more—in particular, imitative activity—and may thereby reduce returns to innovation elsewhere. This logic clearly resonates with many real-world examples cited in the introduction.

But the net effect on multinationals' innovation activity in the home country—and whether more innovation abroad necessarily substitutes for innovation at home—could run in the other direction. In particular, surviving multinational parents at home may now enjoy higher returns on innovation thanks to facing less competition and thus lower costs in home labor markets for knowledge workers. This possibility accords with the “knowledge capital” framework of multinational firms (see Markusen [2002] for an overview), which assumes that high-productivity knowledge assets are generated in parents and then transferred to host country affiliates.

More recent research on innovation, productivity, and global engagement has added firm heterogeneity into general equilibrium perspectives. This new line of inquiry has been motivated by the emerging empirical evidence that in many countries firms exhibit a large degree of heterogeneity in total factor productivity (TFP) and related performance, and also that globally engaged companies tend to be more productive. For example, Eaton and Kortum (1999, 2002) have addressed how innovation incentives are shaped by global engagement, but with the added richness of distributions of firm outcomes within sectors.

Related to this, a set of recent papers has built general equilibrium models in which heterogeneity in productivity is due to exogenous draws. Firms with better draws can cover the costs of entering export markets or, if especially good, the even higher costs of becoming a multinational by establishing a foreign affiliate.³ In these models, trade liberalization (e.g., lowering ad valorem tariff rates) alters the within-industry productivity mix. Despite different causal forces at play in different models, a common prediction is that liberalization forces the least productive firms to close while expanding the market shares of more productive firms; on net, industry average productivity rises.

That said, these papers do not explicitly model the innovation decisions of firms, which are presumably in the background of TFP outcomes. Yet predictions of how policy liberalizations can alter the within-firm distribution of productivity suggest related predictions for the related within-firm distributions of innovation effort.

B. The Global Engagement of Multinationals Generally Complements Their Home Activities⁴

Much of the public policy discussion surrounding multinationals presumes that expansion and engagement abroad necessarily substitute for home activity—in particular, for employment and capital investment. Some have argued that as multinational affiliates expand operations abroad, they simultaneously reduce activities in parent operations back home. Is this substitution idea accurate? The short answer is no. There are three crucial features of company operations that the substitution idea alone misses: *complementarity, scale, and scope*. Consider the effect of each on employment, from the perspective of a U.S.-based multinational company.

- For some given level of firmwide output, when firms employ many kinds of workers and many nonlabor factors of production as well, then affiliate and parent labor can often be *complements* rather than substitutes in which more hiring abroad means more hiring in the United States as well.
- As discussed in the previous section, affiliates generally expand to access foreign customers and/or to save costs. Both these motives allow multinationals to expand their *scale* of output—both abroad and also in U.S. parents—which can often mean more hiring in the United States as well.
- Affiliate expansion is likely not only to boost firm scale but also to refine the mix of firm activities across parents and affiliates. U.S. parent

employment can rise as they expand their *scope* into higher value-added tasks such as R&D, finance, and general management.

The total impact of affiliate expansion on U.S. parent activity is clearly more complex than the overly simplistic story of straight substitution. The net impact depends on the predominance of substitution versus complementarity, on scale effects, and on scope changes.

For many businesses there is no inherent substitution possibility between foreign expansion and U.S. operations, but rather an inherent complementarity. This is particularly true for many services; for example, the distribution activities of wholesale and retail trade must be performed in close proximity to final customers, and affiliate expansion here tends to boost many parent activities such as logistical management and technology support. This complementarity often arises in manufacturing as well: for example, in cross-border networks, in which different stages of production are located in different countries with output levels moving in tandem in all locations.

But the ultimate proof lies in the empirical evidence. Both aggregate and company-level statistics show that foreign-affiliate expansion tends to complement U.S. parent employment, investment, and sales as well.

Start with the aggregate evidence. Using data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), figure 2 reports total employment in U.S.

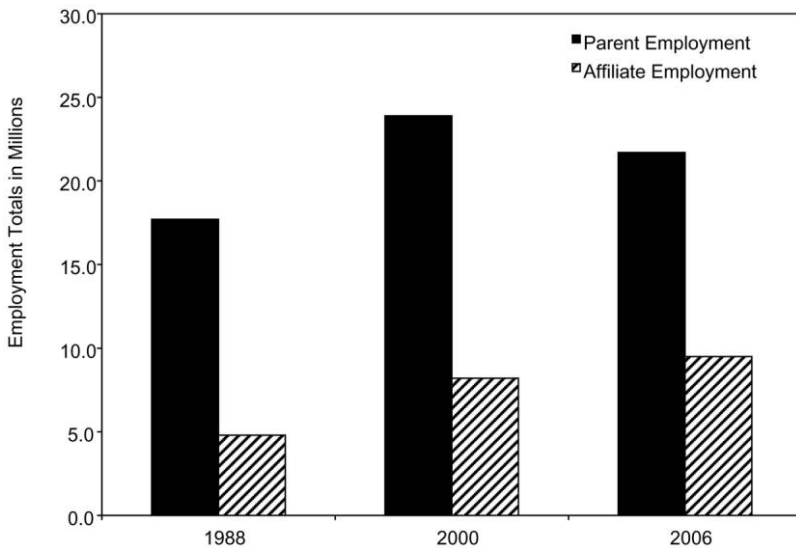


Fig. 2. Employment at U.S. parents and foreign affiliates

parents and majority-owned foreign affiliates in 3 years of the past generation: 1988, 2000, and 2006 (the most recent year of available data).

From 1988 through 2006, affiliate employment rose by 4.7 million workers, from 4.8 million in 1988 to 9.5 million. Over that same period, parent employment in the United States rose by nearly as much: 4.0 million, from 17.7 million to 21.7 million. *This broad pattern of rising employment globally suggests that employment at U.S. parents and at foreign affiliates tend to be complements.*

A similar picture of complementarity is given by capital expenditures. From 1988 through 2006, affiliate capital spending rose by \$106.6 billion, from \$46.6 billion to \$153.2 billion. Over that same period, parent capital spending in the United States rose by two and a half times that amount: \$265.4 billion, from \$177.2 billion to \$442.6 billion. *This broad pattern of rising capital investment globally suggests that investment at U.S. parents and at foreign affiliates also tend to complement each other.*

The broad evidence of figure 2 is not to say that every single expansion abroad by U.S. multinationals leads to expanded home activity. It is also not to say that in every single year affiliate and parent activity move in tandem. The employment statistics of figure 2 show this quite clearly. In the period 1988–2000, the total affiliate employment increase of 3.3 million (from 4.8 million to 8.1 million) was nearly doubled by U.S. parents as their total payrolls rose by 6.2 million (from 17.7 million to 23.9 million).

The period 2000–2006 was different, however. As overall affiliate employment rose by 1.3 million, overall parent employment fell by 2.2 million. What accounts for the fact that from 2000 to 2006 aggregate U.S. parent employment has fallen whereas aggregate foreign-affiliate employment has continued to rise? Disaggregating by industry reveals a pattern not of affiliates hollowing out parents, but rather of different business cycles and overall business environments facing U.S. parents and affiliates.

First, 67.5% of the 2000–2006 employment increase in foreign affiliates was accounted for by just three industries—retail trade (+340,900), business administration and support services (+288,600), and food and accommodation services (+265,500)—that are the very sort of businesses discussed earlier in this paper, where reaching foreign customers necessarily happens through affiliates, not exporting, and where foreign expansion tends to complement parent activity, not substitute for it. Indeed, over this time period, U.S. employment was rising for parents operating in both retail and food/accommodations and was down only

slightly for parents operating in business administration and support services.

In the U.S. parents, several major industries experienced moderate employment declines after 2000. Manufacturing parents experienced a very large fall: by over 1.6 million workers, or 76.0% of the all-parents decline of 2.2 million. But contrary to the common assertion that falling U.S. manufacturing employment is being caused by U.S. parents exporting these jobs to their foreign affiliates, it is notable that during this same period, foreign-affiliate employment in manufacturing moved very little: rising by 128,300, or just 2.9%.

Instead of jobs being exported, widespread U.S. parent employment declines since 2000 were likely driven by two major forces. One was the U.S. recession in 2001, which continued to pressure the U.S. labor market until mid-2003 and which was not experienced by much of the rest of the world. Indeed, overall U.S. manufacturing employment during this time fell by slightly over 3 million. The other major force was the strong productivity performance of U.S. parents. Productivity gains can reduce short-term employment when sales growth is not strong enough to keep pace with the innovations. Indeed, since 2003 when the economic recovery was well under way, total U.S. parent employment has risen slightly: from a trough of 21.1 million to the 21.7 million reported in figure 2.

Over the full generation described in figure 2, to the extent that there was faster foreign-affiliate growth than U.S. parent growth, much was driven by faster growth abroad in overall output and incomes—and thus in customers to be served. From 1990 through 2008, growth in U.S. GDP averaged 2.7%, in contrast to 1990–2007 averages of 3.4% for the overall world, 4.6% for emerging and developing countries as a whole, 6.3% in India, and a remarkable 9.9% in China.⁵

These growth rate differentials carry significant implications for the evolving size of national markets and thus prospective customers. At an annual rate of growth of 2.8%, the U.S. market doubles in size every 25 years. The comparable doubling periods for India and China are just 11.4 and 7.3 years, respectively. And despite the recession in many parts of the world today, these growth rate differentials are widely forecast to persist into the future. If past becomes prologue, then in the time it takes the U.S. market to double from its current size, the Chinese market will expand more than tenfold. The bottom line here is that to achieve strong revenue growth, U.S. multinationals must expand their access to foreign customers.

What about company-level evidence on parent and affiliate activities? Some of the most compelling evidence of complementarity between U.S.

parents and foreign affiliates comes from analysis of the raw company-level data collected in legally mandated surveys of the BEA that underlie figure 2. These raw data permit analysis of changes in affiliate and parent activity within each company rather than aggregating these changes across all companies.

In recent years, a small number of studies using these company-level data have been conducted. Desai, Foley, and Hines (2009), in particular, carefully analyzed a panel data set of all U.S. multinationals in manufacturing from 1982 to 2004.⁶ They estimated that a 10% increase in foreign-affiliate capital investment causes an average response of a 2.6% increase in that affiliate's U.S. parent capital investment. They similarly found that a 10% increase in foreign-affiliate employee compensation causes an average response of a 3.7% increase in that affiliate's U.S. parent employee compensation. Growth in affiliates tends to bring growth in parents as well. Each additional dollar in an affiliate's employee compensation generates an average increase in its parent employee compensation of about \$1.11. And each additional dollar in an affiliate's capital investment causes an average increase in its parent's capital investment of about \$0.67. Accordingly, more affiliate activity tends to cause more, not less, parent activity.

The authors of this study concluded, "These results do not support the popular notion that expansions abroad reduce a [multinational] firm's domestic activity, instead suggesting the opposite" (181). The perspective of a fixed amount of activity being reallocated between parents and affiliates is not accurate. Rather, the correct perspective is one of parallel changes over time in both affiliates and parents—driven by considerations of complementarity, scale, and scope.

A second piece of company-level evidence on parent-affiliate complementarity is differences between parent and affiliate industry classifications. Worldwide in 2006 there were 23,853 majority-owned foreign affiliates of 2,278 U.S. multinationals. Each can be classified in an industry one of two different ways: on the basis of the primary activity of the affiliate itself or the primary activity of its U.S. parent. The top row of table 6 counts affiliates classified by industry of the *parent* for three broad groups. The bottom row repeats this using industry of the *affiliate*.

There is a dramatic difference in the industrial composition of affiliates between these two classifications. When classified by their parents' primary activity, the majority of affiliates are in manufacturing. But when classified by their own primary activity, the majority of affiliates are outside manufacturing. This substantial swing—7,364 affiliates, or 30.9% of the total—is driven by differences in the activities of parents

Table 6
Complementarity between Affiliates and Parents of U.S. Multinationals

	Manufacturing	Wholesale Trade	Other Sectors
Number of affiliates when classified by industry of parent	15,683	1,355	6,815
Number of affiliates when classified by industry of affiliate	8,319	4,265	11,269

and affiliates' drive. Although the majority of parents—and thus their affiliates when classified by parents' industry—operate mainly in manufacturing, the majority of affiliates operate in services.⁷ This is strong evidence that parents and affiliates perform complementary activities.

One clear example of this complementarity highlighted in table 6 is wholesale trade. In 2006 there were just 1,355 affiliates—just 5.7% of the total—owned by parents whose main line of business was wholesaling. But of the affiliates themselves, 4,265—17.9% of the total—were wholesalers. This difference accounts for 39.5% of the difference in manufacturing counts, and it indicates that an important dimension of global engagement for many manufacturing parents is to establish foreign affiliates that distribute manufactures into host country markets. Cross-border links like these revealed by table 6 are not about substitution, but rather about rich patterns of dynamic complementarity and breadth of scope.

C. Evidence That Foreign Knowledge Discovery by Biopharmaceutical Companies Complements Their Home Activities

The evidence of the previous subsection does not speak specifically to biopharmaceutical companies and their knowledge discovery efforts, but rather to companies in all industries across all activities taken together. But the balance of evidence on complementarity between affiliate and parent activity within multinational companies suggests that a good starting assumption is that as biopharmaceutical companies globalize knowledge discovery, this will tend to support—not substitute for—their home country knowledge discovery as well.

Some more direct evidence on this can be gleaned from publicly available BEA data on U.S. multinational companies. First is the fact that worldwide R&D expenditures of U.S. multinational companies have long been highly concentrated in America in their U.S. parents, not abroad in their foreign affiliates. In 1982, U.S. parents accounted for

93.6% of the global R&D of U.S. multinational companies. In 2006, U.S. parents still performed 86.8% of worldwide R&D by U.S. multinationals: \$187.8 billion versus just \$28.5 billion, or \$6.59 in parent knowledge discovery for every \$1.00 by affiliates. Over 24 years the affiliate share had grown by only about 7 percentage points, and during that time, parent R&D expenditures were still increasing substantially.

What about biopharmaceutical companies in particular? With the BEA's 1999 conversion to the North American Industry Classification System, its closest grouping to this area is called "pharmaceuticals and medicines." In 2006, 43 U.S. multinational companies were operating with this as their primary line of business. What was the global footprint of these companies that year in terms of parent-affiliate relative sizes, and have these relative sizes changed over time?

Figure 3 reports 2000 and 2006 total employment in U.S. parents and majority-owned foreign affiliates whose main line of business was pharmaceuticals and medicines. From 2000 through 2006, affiliate employment rose by 2,400 workers, or 1.2%: from 205,100 to 206,500. Over that same period, parent employment in the United States rose by 39,800, or 10.9%: from 363,600 to 403,400. This broad pattern of rising employment globally suggests that employment at U.S. parents and at foreign affiliates in biopharmaceuticals tend to be complements. Indeed, the larger U.S. employment increases in recent years—in both level and

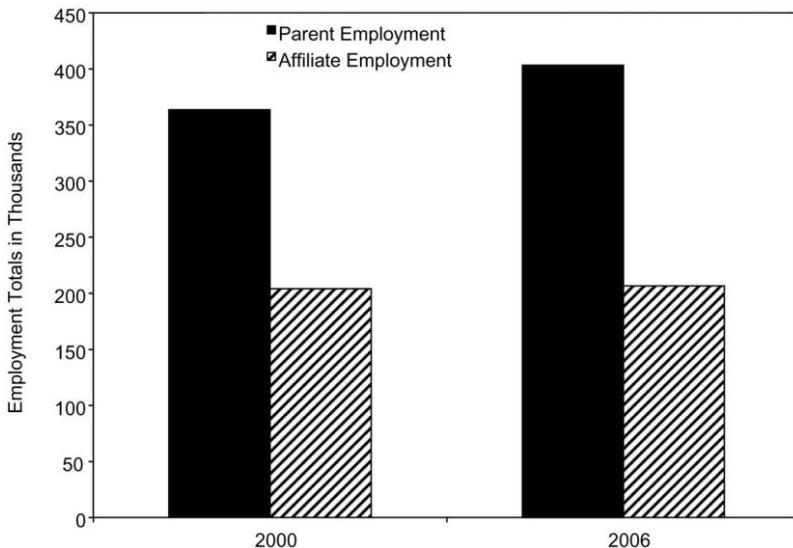


Fig. 3. Pharmaceuticals and medicines: employment at U.S. parents and foreign affiliates

percentage terms—have meant that global employment in these companies is becoming more concentrated in the United States, not less: rising from 64.0% to 66.1%.

A similar picture of complementarity is given by other activity measures the BEA reports at this level of industry disaggregation. From 2000 through 2006, affiliate value added rose by \$11.9 billion, from \$25.7 billion to \$37.6 billion. Over that same period, parent value added in the United States rose by \$30.5 billion, from \$63.2 billion to \$93.7 billion. Indeed, the parent increase was larger in percentage terms, such that, as with employment, global value added in these companies was also becoming more concentrated in the United States—rising from 71.1% to 71.4%. This broad pattern of rising output globally also suggests that activity at U.S. parents and at foreign affiliates generally complement each other.

Unfortunately, only in 2004 did the BEA begin reporting affiliate R&D expenditures for detailed industry groupings. In 2006, foreign affiliates in pharmaceuticals and medicines performed \$5.2 billion in R&D. This contrasted with \$36.2 billion in R&D performed by U.S. parents in pharmaceuticals and medicines. This was up 75.6% from the 2000 parent tally of \$20.6 billion, a percentage increase that exceeded the 2000–2006 percentage increase in employment and output by these parents. Thus, in 2006, U.S. parents accounted for 87.5% of the worldwide R&D conducted in pharmaceuticals and medicines by these companies—slightly above the 86.8% worldwide R&D share cited earlier across all industries.⁸

One additional piece of evidence that expansion abroad by biopharmaceutical companies tends to complement their home country activities comes from industry classification. Again, in 2006, there were 43 U.S. parents classified in the primary activity of pharmaceuticals and medicines. When classified by their parents' primary activity, there were 1,256 majority-owned affiliates in this same industry. But when classified by their own primary activity, there were just 425 affiliates classified in pharmaceuticals and medicines. This small degree of overlap indicates that most foreign affiliates of U.S. biopharmaceutical parents are engaged in different activities such as wholesale distribution.

Our conclusion from the various pieces of evidence in this subsection is that foreign knowledge discovery by biopharmaceutical companies tends to complement, not substitute for, their home country activities.

IV. Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

Location possibilities for biopharmaceutical firms are expanding, driven by factors such as falling natural and political barriers to trade

and communication, extension and strengthening of patent protection through institutions including the World Trade Organization, and growing supplies of skilled labor and related infrastructure in large, relatively low-cost countries. This paper has examined the causes and consequences of this global expansion of knowledge discovery by biopharmaceutical firms.

We first discussed the empirical evidence on the extent and nature of this process. By some key indicators, it appears that while global expansion of knowledge discovery is occurring and may even be accelerating, this process is still at an early stage. New, low-cost locations such as China and India are still a very small component of worldwide biopharmaceutical research, and although the scale of activity in these countries has grown rapidly in recent years, its ultimate “steady-state” size is difficult to assess given powerful economic forces driving agglomeration and “clustering” in biomedical research activity. We then examined whether this global spread of biopharmaceutical R&D supports or hurts host country knowledge activity. Our conclusion was that foreign knowledge discovery by biopharmaceutical companies tends to complement, not substitute for, their home country activities.

Public policy may nonetheless play an important role in shaping the evolution of location of biopharmaceutical research. One example is immigration policy, which restricts the free flow of human capital, particularly the highly skilled and highly specialized scientists who are a critical resource for the biopharmaceutical industry. Policies such as H1-B visa caps or limitations on the ability of foreign graduate students to stay in the United States after completing formal education and training seem likely to encourage growth in R&D activity in these individuals’ home countries or in locations to which they are attracted by immigration policies that recognize the “global war for talent” by giving priority to highly skilled and highly trained applicants.⁹ Indeed, U.S. policy toward high-skilled immigration is becoming more protectionist in recent times. In particular, the Employ American Workers Act that was part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has made it much harder for hundreds of U.S. companies to hire skilled foreign workers under the H1-B visa program.

The global location of biopharmaceutical research is also shaped by national tax policies. In particular, the complexity and reach of countries’ corporate tax code can influence the choices of globally engaged companies regarding the scale and scope of their global operations. Today it is widely acknowledged that the United States is a high-tax, high-complication outlier relative to nearly all the world’s corporate tax

systems. Nearly all foreign countries operate territorial tax systems, not worldwide tax systems such as the United States. This means that U.S. multinational companies are taxed not just on their U.S. earnings but also on their foreign source earnings—at a current statutory corporate rate of 35%, second-highest among the 30 OECD countries behind only Japan at 39% and well below the current OECD simple average corporate tax rate of about 23%. As globalization of biopharmaceutical companies proceeds, host country tax regimes are playing an increasingly important role in their strategic choices.

There are several lines of inquiry left unexamined in our paper and its focus on business strategy and economic considerations. One in particular is the ethical and philosophic issues raised by the globalization of pharmaceutical companies. Glickman et al. (2009) discuss these ethical issues, many of which do not arise in other industries such as information technology and transportation products, and argue that “it is essential to create a robust framework to ensure the integrity of research, wherever it takes place” (820). We share this sentiment and encourage future work in this important area along both economic and noneconomic lines.

Endnotes

1. Not all patents by biopharmaceutical companies fall in this class, and these counts may exclude significant inventive activity in instrumentation, process technologies, genetic engineering, etc.

2. There may be some “home bias” in this data source (<http://clinicaltrials.gov>), which is maintained in English by the National Library of Medicine. Data submissions reflect both Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements and a policy instituted by editors of the world’s leading medical journals, but likely underrepresent trials that the sponsor does not intend to publish in an international journal or does intend to use as part of an FDA submission.

3. Recent models tracing heterogeneous productivity to global engagement include Bernard et al. (2003), Melitz (2003), and Helpman, Melitz, and Yeaple (2004).

4. This subsection draws extensively from Slaughter (2009).

5. These average rates of growth of GDP were calculated from annual rates of GDP growth reported in International Monetary Fund (2008, tables A1–A4).

6. BEA company-level data are not publicly available, and so research on these data can be performed only by scholars granted special clearance by the BEA.

7. Of the 2,278 parent firms in 2006, 1,132 were primarily in manufacturing. The BEA classifies the main line of activity for each parent and affiliate on the basis of terms of the industry composition of sales.

8. The BEA data discussed here differ in several ways from the PhRMA data in fig. 1. One important difference is that the PhRMA data report non-U.S. R&D spending that is outside of the foreign affiliates of U.S. multinationals. This

scope difference helps explain the slightly higher U.S. shares of R&D in the BEA data than in the PhRMA data.

9. See Kerr and Lincoln (2009) for data and analysis of the impact of the H1-B visa program.

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