



# Biotech Daily

Friday July 8, 2011

*Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies*

- \* **ASX, BIOTECH UP: BENITEC UP 7%; ANTISENSE DOWN 10%**
- \* **SIRTEX SIR-SPHERES INCREASE INOPERABLE LIVER CANCER SURVIVAL**
- \* **UP TO 19% OF VOTES CAST OPPOSE ACUVAX EGM RESOLUTIONS**
- \* **CORRECTION: AGENIX**
- \* **STIRLING LOSES DIRECTORS PROF GLYN TONGE, NEIL COVEY**

## MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market climbed 1.07 percent on Friday July 8, 2011 with the S&P ASX 200 up 49.2 points to 4654.7 points.

Twenty-one of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, six fell, eight traded unchanged and five were untraded.

Benitec was best, up 0.2 cents or 7.1 percent to three cents with 22.5 million shares traded.

Impedimed and Psivida climbed more than six percent; Bionomics, Mesoblast and Universal Biosensors were up more than five percent; Cellmid, Clinuvel, Optiscan and Patrys were up more than four percent; Cochlear, Phosphagenics and Sirtex were up more than three percent; Heartware, QRX and Viralytics rose more than two percent; with Acrux, Alchemia, Biota, Phylogica and Starpharma up more than one percent.

Antisense led the falls, down 0.1 cents or 10.0 percent to 0.9 cents with 10 million shares traded, followed by Prana down 5.3 percent to 18 cents with 67,055 shares traded.

Prima lost 3.1 percent; Anteo and Genetic Technologies shed more than two percent; with Pharmaxis down 1.6 percent.

## SIRTEX MEDICAL

Sirtex says a six-year retrospective analysis of 325 patients treated with SIR-Spheres for inoperable primary liver cancer increases survival.

Sirtex said the study was the largest multi-centre evaluation of radioembolisation, also known as selective internal radiation therapy or SIRT, using targeted radioactive SIR-Spheres microspheres and the results confirm the treatment was safe and effective in a range of patients with early to advanced stages of the disease.

Sirtex said that researchers at eight European centres reported "robust evidence of the survival achieved" using SIR-Spheres including patients with advanced disease and few treatment options.

Sirtex chief executive officer Gilman Wong said the "positive results build on the growing body of robust clinical evidence that demonstrates SIR-Spheres microspheres deliver very encouraging clinical outcomes across the different stages of liver cancer."

The European Network on Radio-embolisation with Yttrium-90 Resin Microspheres (ENRY) results were published in *Hepatology*, the journal of the American Association of the Study of Liver Diseases.

An abstract is at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/hep.24451/abstract>.

The chair of ENRY Prof Bruno Sangro said the group used the Barcelona Clinic liver cancer (BCLC) staging criteria, with the majority of patients evaluated in either advanced (BCLC C: 56.3%) or intermediate (BCLC B: 26.8%) disease.

Sirtex said the patients were administered a median dose of 1.6 GBq of beta-radiating yttrium-90 resin microspheres, predominately as a single procedure delivered trans-arterially to the liver via a catheter through the femoral and hepatic arteries.

The median overall survival of the SIRT-treated patients evaluated by the ENRY group was 12.8 months and survival varied significantly by disease stage, with 24.4 months for patients in BCLC A, 16.9 months in BCLC B, and 10.0 months in BCLC C.

"As ENRY was not a prospective study, our findings must be interpreted conservatively," Prof Sangro said.

"Radioembolisation using SIR-Spheres directly targets tumors and spares viable liver tissue, which enables us to reduce the burden of disease and potentially increase both the patient's survival and quality of life," Prof Sangro said.

"The greatest survival benefit can be expected in those patients with better performance status, fewer tumor nodules and no occlusion of the portal vein," Prof Sangro said.

Prof Sangro said that radioembolisation may be particularly helpful in four specific patient populations including those who might otherwise be considered for transarterial chemo-embolisation (TACE) but may benefit more from SIR-Spheres; patients who are poor candidates for TACE due to the high number of tumor nodules, that is more than five nodules, or spread to both lobes of the liver; patients who have previously failed TACE; and, finally, patients who are ineligible for TACE because of portal vein occlusion.

The ENRY collaboration said that radioembolisation was very well-tolerated by these otherwise ill patients.

More than half (54.5%) experienced fatigue; around one third (32.0%) reported nausea or vomiting; while slightly more than a quarter (27.1%) reported abdominal pain and one in ten reported a mild fever, but the symptoms were transient in all cases.

The media release said a small number of patients (3.7%) suffered from gastrointestinal ulceration, when some microspheres inadvertently passed into a gastric artery.

Prof Sangro said radioembolisation "merits routine use in a number of patients with primary liver cancer [and may] also be a synergistic option when combined with newer pharmaceutical treatments, such as the tyrosine kinase inhibitor, sorafenib."

Sirtex was up 19 points or 3.8 percent to \$5.16.

### ACUVAX

Acuvax says that resolutions to ratify a placement and capital raising and approve a share issue were passed with opposition from up to 18.6 percent of votes cast.

All three votes were won by similar margins, with the closest vote the approval of shares to Corporate Advisory Mandate passing with 344,285,254 proxy votes in favor (81.4%) and 78,877,067 proxy votes against (18.6%).

Acuvax said that more than 351 million proxy votes abstained from the vote.

Acuvax was up 0.1 cents or 100.0 percent to 0.2 cents.

### AGENIX

Last night's article on the sensitivity and specificity of Agenix's phase II trial of Thromboview for acute pulmonary embolism study provided an incorrect link.

The correct link to the abstract of the article entitled 'Detection of Pulmonary Emboli With 99mTc-Labeled Anti-D-dimer (DI-80B3) Fab Fragments (Thromboview)' published in the Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine is at:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21680946>.

The error was made by the company and no sub-editors were hurt in making this correction.

Agenix was up 0.1 cents or 5.8 percent to 1.8 cents.

### STIRLING PRODUCTS

Stirling managing director Peter Boonen told the company in an extraordinary general meeting address that directors Prof Glyn Tonge and Neil Covey had resigned.

Mr Boonen said the suspension over funding and board composition would continue for about two weeks.

Mr Boonen said "the institutional and analyst interest in the company in the UK is a direct contrast to that in Australia".

Stirling has previously announced an intention to list on London's Alternative Investment Market.

All resolutions to the extraordinary general meeting were passed overwhelmingly.

Stirling last traded at 0.2 cents.