



# Biotech Daily

Tuesday February 14, 2012

*Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies*

- \* **ASX, BIOTECH DOWN: GENERA UP 18%, VIRALYTICS DOWN 5%**
- \* **\$180k FOR WEHI OVARIAN CANCER GENE STUDY**
- \* **PRIMA FILES REGISTRATION FOR NASDAQ LISTING**
- \* **QRX APPOINTS DR EDWARD RUDNIC CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**
- \* **FLUOROTECHNICS GOES MINING**

## MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market fell 0.99 percent on Tuesday February 14, 2012 with the S&P ASX 200 down 42.3 points to 4242.8 points.

Thirteen of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 15 fell, seven traded unchanged and five were untraded. All three Big Caps fell.

Genera was the best, up three cents or 17.65 percent to 20 cents with 17,500 shares traded followed by Cellmid up 9.1 percent to 1.2 cents with 7.5 million shares traded.

Avita climbed eight percent; Benitec was up five percent; Allied Health was up 3.6 percent; Prima and Phylogica rose more than two percent; Alchemia, Bionomics, QRX and Sirtex were up more than one percent; with Heartware and Universal Biosensors up by less than one percent.

Viralytics led the falls, down two cents or 5.48 percent to 34.5 cents with 230,906 shares, followed by Phosphagenics and Sunshine Heart both down five percent to 19 cents and 3.8 cents, respectively, with 5.4 million shares and 314,215 shares traded, respectively.

Antisense lost 4.8 percent; Clinuvel, Nanosonics, Neuren and Prana were down more than three percent; Acrux, Biota, Cathrx, Impedimed, Pharmaxis and Starpharma shed two percent or more; Resmed was down 1.1 percent; with Cochlear, CSL and Mesoblast down by less than one percent.

## [THE WALTER AND ELIZA HALL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH](#)

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute says researcher Dr Rachael Rutkowski has been awarded \$180,000 to study a known ovarian cancer-causing gene.

The Institute said that the Cure Cancer Australia Foundation had funded the study of the cancer-causing gene by the institute's stem cells and cancer division.

The Institute said the gene belonged to the group of genes related to the v-myc myelocytomatosis viral oncogene homolog (avian) or MYC family of cancer-causing genes that were overproduced in more than 50 percent of human cancers.

Dr Rutkowski said that the MYC gene family had gained attention as a potential cause of some high-grade serous ovarian cancers that were associated with poor clinical outcomes.

"The Cure Cancer Australia funding will allow us to develop better disease models that we can use to discover whether the MYC gene family has a significant role in ovarian cancer development," Dr Rutkowski said.

"It could also help us identify new therapeutic targets and biomarkers for diagnosis of this devastating disease," Dr Rutkowski said.

WEHI said that ovarian cancer was the sixth most common cause of cancer death in Australian women and each year, more than 1200 Australian women were diagnosed with ovarian cancer, with about 800 women dying from the disease.

The Institute said that epithelial ovarian cancer accounted for 90 percent of all ovarian cancers and despite efforts to develop better screening tools, 80 percent of epithelial ovarian cancers spread beyond the ovary before they were diagnosed and 70 percent are generally incurable.

WEHI said that high-grade serous ovarian cancers were the most lethal type of epithelial ovarian cancer, accounting for about 40 percent of all epithelial ovarian cancers.

The institute's head of ovarian cancer research and an oncologist at the Royal Melbourne Hospital Prof Clare Scott said new treatments for ovarian cancer were urgently needed.

"High-grade serous ovarian cancers are aggressive, difficult-to-treat cancers that often have a poor prognosis," Prof Scott said.

"The cancers are typically not diagnosed until after they have spread and are often resistant to chemotherapy drugs," Prof Scott said.

"It is imperative that we improve our understanding of how ovarian cancers develop so we can identify molecular or cellular targets for new therapeutic agents," Prof Scott said.

WEHI said that changes in the levels of MYC-family proteins had been identified as a potential cause of at least 15-20 percent of high-grade serous ovarian cancers and were associated with poor clinical outcomes.

Dr Rutkowski said that the research team would develop pre-clinical models of ovarian cancer with high levels of MYC-family proteins and abnormal p53 (tumor protein) signaling, to determine whether the MYC gene family was involved in the development and chemotherapy-resistance of these cancers.

"We are hoping that we will identify molecular targets for the development of new therapeutic agents to treat ovarian cancer," Dr Rutkowski said.

"Similar studies have yielded new therapeutic targets for breast cancer; for example, the treatment of [human epidermal growth factor receptor 2] Her2-positive breast cancers, which typically had a poor prognosis, has been revolutionized by the development of Her2-targeted therapeutic approaches," Dr Rutkowski said.

"We are looking to accelerate the development of similar targeted therapies for ovarian cancer," Dr Rutkowski said.

### PRIMA BIOMED

Prima says it has filed a registration statement with the US Securities and Exchange Commission to enable listing American depositary receipts on the Nasdaq Global Market. Prima said that each American depositary receipt (ADR) equaled 30 Australian shares. Prima said its proposed Nasdaq listing would be a Level II ADR compliance listing, managed by Bank of New York Mellon and US broking houses Deutsche Bank AG, Noble Financial and Aegis.

The company said it was unable to nominate an expected date of the listing. Prima was up half a cent or 2.8 percent to 18.5 cents with 25 million shares traded.

### QRX PHARMA

QRX has appointed Dr Edward Rudnic as its chief operating officer.

QRX said that Dr Rudnic had more than 30 years of senior management and product commercialization experience.

QRX chief executive officer Dr John Holaday said that Dr Rudnic's role would be to coordinate the company's commercialization plans with strategic partner, Actavis, for the intended launch of Moxduo Immediate Release (IR) "into the multi-billion dollar US acute pain marketplace" by October 2012.

The company said that Dr Rudnic was a leader in the development and commercialization of pharmaceutical products and drug delivery technologies.

QRX said that Dr Rudnic founded Advancis Pharmaceuticals, later renamed Middlebrook Pharmaceuticals, using a proprietary drug delivery technology to improve systemic distribution of existing chemical entities.

The company said that previously Dr Rudnic held executive and managerial positions with Shire Pharmaceuticals, Pharmavene, Schering Plough and ER Squibb.

QRX said that Dr Rudnic had a Bachelor of Science in pharmacy, a Masters of Science in pharmaceuticals and a Ph D in pharmaceutical sciences from the University of Rhode Island.

QRX was up 2.5 cents or 1.5 percent to \$1.67.

### FLUOROTECHNICS

Fluorotechnics says it has an option to acquire the businesses of Lamboo Resources and Mckintosh Resources.

Last week, Fluorotechnics requested a trading halt "regarding an option to acquire certain resource assets" (BD: Feb 10, 2012).

Today, Fluorotechnics said the option was subject to regulatory approval, confirmatory due diligence, financing and shareholder approval.

The company said Lamboo and Mckintosh had prospective base and precious metals exploration assets in Valla, New South Wales, as well as Halls Creek and McIntosh in Western Australia and that if the six-month option was exercised, the acquisition price would be \$3.5 million to be paid in equity.

Fluorotechnics was originally developing fluorescent gels for the protein research industry (BD: Sep 4, 2008; Sep 9, 2011).

Fluorotechnics was up 1.5 cents or 150 percent to 2.5 cents with 241,332 shares traded.