



Biotech Daily

Thursday May 10, 2012

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

- * **ASX, BIOTECH UP: AVITA UP 12.5%, OPTISCAN DOWN 9%**
- * **MESOBLAST APPOINTS TEVA'S DR BEN-ZION WEINER AS DIRECTOR**
- * **IMMURON CONTRACTS INTEGRATED FOR SE ASIA TRAVELAN SALES**
- * **AVITA STARTS RECELL US DEFENSE SCAR TRIAL**
- * **UQ WINS \$100,000 GATES GRANT FOR ROTAVIRUS VACCINE**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market rose 0.48 percent on Thursday May 10, 2012 with the S&P ASX 200 up 20.5 points to 4,295.6 points.

Eleven of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 10 fell, 14 traded unchanged and five were untraded. All three Big Caps were up.

Avita was the best, was up 2.5 cents or 12.5 percent to 22.5 cents with 715,679 shares traded, followed by Patrys up 10.3 percent to 3.2 cents with 32,500 shares traded.

Genera climbed 6.7 percent; Neuren was up 4.2 percent; Circadian, Cochlear, Nanosonics, Resmed and Reva were up one percent or more; with Acrux, CSL, Heartware, Sirtex and Starpharma up by less than one percent.

Optiscan led the falls, down one cent or 9.1 percent to 10 cents with 432,500 shares traded.

Antisense lost 6.25 percent; Benitec, Bioniche and Cellmid fell five percent or more; Bionomics and Psivida were down more than four percent; Biota shed 2.4 percent; with Alchemia and Mesoblast both down 1.1 percent.

MESOBLAST

Mesoblast has appointed Teva Pharmaceutical Industries' senior executive Dr Ben-Zion Weiner as a non-executive director, effective immediately.

Mesoblast chief executive Prof Silviu Itescu told Biotech Daily that Dr Weiner had been appointed as the special adviser to Teva's incoming chief executive officer Dr Jeremy Levin, who replaced Shlomo Yanai, yesterday.

Prof Itescu said that Dr Weiner was formerly Teva's head of research and development. In its media release, Mesoblast said that Dr Weiner had been Teva's head of global research and development for more than three decades and was most recently chief research and development officer and a member of the Teva executive committee.

The company said that Dr Weiner had directly overseen all pharmaceutical research and development and innovative branded product pipeline development.

Mesoblast said that Dr Weiner had been responsible for the development of hundreds of generic products for the US, EU and other markets, as well as being responsible for the development and regulatory approval of Teva's innovative product portfolio.

The company said that Dr Weiner had twice been the recipient of the Rothschild prize for innovation, including for the commercialization of Copaxone for multiple sclerosis.

"I am happy and proud to be a board member of Mesoblast," Dr Weiner said.

"I trust that stem cell technology is the future of medicine and that Mesoblast is at the cutting edge of this exciting new field," Dr Weiner said. "I believe that Mesoblast's unique technology and professional execution capabilities have the potential to deliver multiple innovative biologic products across a broad range of clinical indications."

Mesoblast fell eight cents or 1.1 percent to \$7.27.

IMMURON

Immuron has appointed Integramed Asia (Thailand) Co to sell Travelan in Thailand, Hong Kong, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.

Immuron said that the cow colostrum derived Travelan was "clinically-proven to prevent with 90 percent efficacy the main cause of travelers' diarrhea".

The company said that travelers' diarrhoea was endemic in each of these countries, which according to the World Tourism Organization, hosted more than 44 million travelers in 2010, in addition to the local resident population of about 190 million people.

Immuron said that under the agreement Integramed was required to attain regulatory approval for the sale of Travelan in its licenced countries and to sell specified minimum volumes and that regulatory approval process had begun.

The company said that there was an agreed timetable for the launch and sales of Travelan in the licenced countries and that Integramed was a licenced seller in the Indo-China market with branches in Bangkok, Singapore and the UK.

Immuron chief executive officer Joe Bains said that Thailand and the other countries licenced to Integramed were "very relevant to Travelan, especially because the large flux of tourists visiting and/or passing through these countries".

"Our agreement with Integramed is another step in Immuron's strategy of rolling out Travelan on a global basis to build sales," Mr Bains said.

Integramed managing director Dr Richard Lu said his company was "enthusiastic about selling Travelan in our licenced countries given its high efficacy in preventing travelers' diarrhoea in a region where the condition is prevalent".

"We are impressed with its efficacy in preventing travelers' diarrhoea, an often debilitating condition and one that has ruined many business and vacation plans," Dr Lu said.

Immuron was unchanged at 1.8 cents.

AVITA MEDICAL

Avita has begun enrolment in a US feasibility study for the use of Recell for hypertrophic dyspigmented scars or raised and/or discolored scars).

Avita said the US Food and Drug Administration-approved trial had treated the first three patients at the Indiana University Wishard Hospital Burn Center in Indianapolis, Indiana, for scarring resulting from previous grafting due to burn injuries.

The company said the approved FDA protocol allowed the treatment of 20 patients with scars, at up to four US study sites, who would be assessed for healing and pain on a weekly basis during the initial four weeks following treatment and at weeks 12 and 24 the treatment site would be assessed for healing and aesthetic outcomes.

Avita chief executive officer Dr William Dolphin said the FDA scar study was “an important step for Avita”.

“Recell has the potential to provide significant benefits over current options in the treatment of acute and chronic wounds and for a wide range of skin defects,” Dr Dolphin said. “We are confident that this study will demonstrate the effectiveness of Recell in the corrective treatment of scars with direct application to the very large cosmetic markets.”

Avita said the feasibility study was primarily designed to assess the effectiveness of Recell for the treatment of scars in a single session, with endpoints of time-to-healing and aesthetic outcomes, in comparison to the current standard of care involving dermabrasion of the scar and often requiring multiple treatment sessions.

The company said that the study was funded by the US Department of Defense as part of a manufacturing technology program and joint improvised explosive device defeat ‘Limb Salvage and Regenerative Medicine Initiative’.

Avita said that data from the study would provide input for the design of a statistically powered clinical investigation and following completion the company would submit the data and seek FDA approval for a pivotal trial protocol.

Avita said it was currently conducting an FDA-approved trial of Recell for acute burns.

Avita was up 2.5 cents or 12.5 percent to 22.5 cents.

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

The University of Queensland’s Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology has won a \$100,000 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant.

The University said that Institute’s Prof Anton Middelberg won a Grand Challenges Explorations award for a health and development research project, entitled ‘A Transformational Vaccine Platform for the Grand Challenge of Rotavirus’.

The University said that the grants funded individuals “to explore ideas that can break the mould in how we solve persistent global health and development challenges”.

A media release said that Prof Middelberg's project aimed to deliver a new vaccine against rotavirus using virus-like particles which mimicked the virus and that while virus-like particles had a history of safe use for other diseases, they were manufactured in cells using complex and costly approaches and Prof Middelberg intended to make rotavirus virus-like particles in a reactor, developing a new manufacturing technology for virus-like particles that could be used in the developing world.

The University said the program provided initial grants of \$US100,000 and successful projects had the opportunity to receive a follow-on grant of up to \$US1 million.

Applications for the current round would be accepted until May 15, 2012.

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