



Biotech Daily

Thursday September 6, 2012

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

- * **ASX UP, BIOTECH DOWN: OPTISCAN UP 20%, AVITA DOWN 8%**
- * **STARPHARMA, ASTRAZENECA ONCOLOGY DENDRIMER DEAL**
- * **WEHI AWARDED \$6.25m APOPTOSIS CANCER RESEARCH GRANT**
- * **GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES LICENCE FOR CONEXIO GENOMICS**
- * **PSIVIDA SAYS UK FUNDING BODY ACCEPTS MORE ILUVIEN DATA**
- * **BIO-MELBOURNE NEUROSCIENCE BREAKFAST**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market was up 0.8 percent on Thursday September 6, 2012 with the S&P ASX 200 up 34.1 points to 4,312.9 points.

Eleven of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 13 fell, 10 traded unchanged and six were untraded.

Optiscan was the best, up 1.5 cents or 20 percent to nine cents with 32,000 shares traded, followed by Tissue Therapies up 15.5 percent to 48.5 cents with 312,555 shares traded.

Starpharma climbed 7.4 percent; Ellex, Mesoblast and Prana rose more than two percent; Biota and Psivida were up more than one percent; with Acrux, Alchemia, Resmed and Sirtex up by less than one percent.

Avita led the falls, down one cent or 7.7 percent to 12 cents with 273,000 shares traded.

Antisense, Impedimed and Prima lost more than six percent; Benitec was down 5.9 percent; Neuren and Phylogica fell four percent or more; Living Cell was down 3.85 percent; Uscom shed 2.9 percent; Bionomics, CSL, Nanosonics, Pharmaxis and Universal Biosensors were down more than one percent; with Cochlear down 0.2 percent.

STARPHARMA HOLDINGS

Starpharma says Astrazeneca has the right to test "certain proprietary ... oncology molecules based on [its] dendrimer technology".

Starpharma said that the financial terms of the agreement were confidential but Astrazeneca would undertake oncology studies using specific Starpharma drug-dendrimer conjugate molecules.

The company said that the primary objective of the program was to assess the suitability of the dendrimer constructs for particular applications within the cancer field.

Starpharma said that the identity of the anti-cancer molecules to be studied was also confidential, but the arrangement did not relate to docetaxel or to dendrimer conjugates of docetaxel.

The company has said it expects to begin clinical trials of dendrimer docetaxel next year (BD: Jul 4, 2012).

Starpharma was up 10.5 cents or 7.4 percent to \$1.53 with 1.2 million shares traded.

THE WALTER AND ELIZA HALL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute says a cancer research team has been awarded a \$6.25 million by the US-based Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

The Institute said the grant of \$1.25 million a year for five years was through the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Specialized Center of Research to fund research into the natural process of cell death, its role in the development of blood cancers and using cell death to improve cancer therapies.

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute said it was one of four awarded and the only team outside the US awarded one of the grants.

WEHI's joint head of molecular genetics of cancer and a director of the Center of Research program Prof Jerry Adams said the research team had been investigating apoptosis, the natural process of cell death, for more than two decades.

"Our bodies make billions of blood cells every day, and, to make room, billions of other blood cells must undergo apoptosis," Prof Adams said.

"If some cells fail to die when they should, they can develop into leukaemia, lymphoma or multiple myeloma," Prof Adams said.

"We are studying how impaired apoptosis contributes to the development of blood cell cancers and renders the malignant cells more resistant to current therapies," Prof Adams said.

The Institute said that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, its researchers discovered that the Bcl-2 protein family promoted the development of blood cancers by preventing the death of cancerous cells and also helped cancer cells resist anti-cancer therapies, putting apoptosis centre stage in cancer research.

"Nearly all anti-cancer therapies act through the Bcl-2 apoptotic switch," Prof Adams said, "but they affect it indirectly."

"To improve cancer treatments we are investigating the effectiveness of new drugs, used either alone or in combination with other therapies, that directly engage the apoptotic machinery and flip the cell death switch," Prof Adams said.

"We have already identified some promising drug candidates and this new funding will allow us to further investigate their effectiveness and the usefulness of other new anti-cancer agents," Prof Adams said.

WEHI said the team awarded the grant comprised Prof Adams, Prof Andreas Strasser, Prof Suzanne Cory, Prof David Vaux, Prof Peter Colman, Prof David Huang, Prof Andrew Roberts, Dr Lorraine O'Reilly, Dr Philippe Bouillet and Dr Chris Burns.

GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES

Genetic Technologies says it has executed a licence agreement with Conexio Genomics of Fremantle, Western Australia.

Genetic Technologies said that Conexio was granted non-exclusive rights to a number of patents relating to its non-coding DNA technology, but as with other agreements, the commercial terms were covered by formal confidentiality provisions.

Genetic Technologies was unchanged at 11 cents.

PSIVIDA

Psivida says the UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has accepted additional data for the reimbursement of Iluvien of chronic diabetic macular oedema.

Psivida said Iluvien has been approved for sale in the UK, France, Germany, Portugal and Austria and a final UK reimbursement decision was due in November 2013.

The company said that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) had accepted additional data relating to the pseudophakic subgroup of patients with chronic diabetic macular oedema, who already had cataract surgery and had received an artificial lens when they entered the phase III study conducted by licensee, Alimera Sciences.

Psivida said that Alimera reported the additional data was included in an appendix to its comments to NICE's appraisal committee and that new data was only accepted if it was likely to affect the provisional recommendations not to recommend Iluvien to the UK National Health Service.

Psivida said that a second meeting was scheduled for October 11, 2012 and Alimera had reported that Iluvien was more cost-effective in the pseudophakic patient subgroup.

Psivida was up three cents or 1.85 percent to \$1.65 with 25 shares traded.

BIO-MELBOURNE NETWORK

The Bio-Melbourne Network says the September 11, 2012 Bio-Breakfast will discuss the work and accelerating the development of Melbourne's Neural Network of research, infrastructure, clinical and commercialization relationships.

Bio-Melbourne said that a key part of the Neural Network was the \$225 million Melbourne Brain Centre "aiding and accelerating Melbourne's longstanding strength in neurosciences and world class standing in this area".

Bio-Melbourne said Florey Neuroscience Institute director Prof Geoffrey Donnan would discuss the Centre's evolution from the Florey, the Mental Health Research Institute and the University of Melbourne's Neurosciences Faculty and would focus on the Centre's research areas including multiple sclerosis, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and mental health.

Bio-Melbourne said Janssen-Cilag Australia biotechnology alliance manager Kathy Connell would discuss commercial opportunities in neuroscience; Monash University pro-vice-chancellor Prof Ian Smith would present on the Victorian Biomedical Imaging Capability and Neuroscience Trials Australia general manager Dr Tina Soulis would discuss clinical trials in neuroscience.

The September 11, 2012 Bio-Breakfast will be held at the Melbourne Brain Centre, Genetics Lane, University of Melbourne, Parkville, with registration from 7:15am.

For more information go to: <http://www.biomelbourne.org/events/view/249>.

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