



Biotech Daily

Friday September 7, 2012

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

- * **ASX, BIOTECH UP: CIRCADIAN UP 15%, ALLIED HEALTH DOWN 4%**
- * **BIOGRID, BIOBANK COLLABORATE FOR CANCER RESEARCH**
- * **EUROPEAN PATENT FOR ANTISENSE ATL1101**
- * **BIOTA IN TALKS FOR RUSSELL PLUMB CEO JOB**
- * **SIENNA RAISES \$900k**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market was up 0.3 percent on Friday September 7, 2012 with the S&P ASX 200 up 12.9 points to 4,325.8 points.

Twenty-two of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, five fell, nine traded unchanged and four were untraded. All three Big Caps fell.

Circadian was the best, up five cents or 14.7 percent to 39 cents with 9,850 shares traded, followed by Antisense up 13.3 percent to 1.7 cents with 19 million shares traded, Optiscan up 11.1 percent to 10 cents with 30,000 shares traded and Impedimed up 10.7 percent to 15.5 cents with 65,862 shares traded.

Universal Biosensors climbed 8.3 percent; Benitec and Cellmid were up more than six percent; Alchemia, Anteo and Ellex were up five percent or more; Genetic Technologies, Phosphagenics and Viralytics were up four percent or more; Biota, Living Cell, Nanosonics and Prana rose two percent or more; Bionomics, Clinuvel and Starpharma were up more than one percent; with Mesoblast up 0.9 percent.

Allied Health led the falls, down 0.1 cents or 3.85 percent to 2.5 cents with 950,700 shares traded.

CSL and Tissue Therapies shed more than two percent; Cochlear and QRX were down more than one percent; with Acrux, Pharmaxis and Resmed down by less than one percent.

VICTORIAN CANCER BIOBANK, BIOGRID AUSTRALIA

The Victorian Cancer Biobank and Biogrid Australia have joined forces to improve bowel cancer management.

A joint media release said that the collaboration would allow researchers to access detailed data associated with tissue and blood samples for cancer research.

The media release said that Biogrid Australia facilitated research across hospitals and medical research institutes, providing a web-based access request system for researchers to apply for access to specific databases and the Victorian Cancer Biobank was a not-for-profit consortium of tissue banks, supported by the Victorian Government.

Biogrid chief executive officer Maureen Turner said the collaboration “opens up new possibilities, further strengthening the work that is underway to establish an integrated technology platform for cancer research in Victoria”.

The media release said that in its 2012 Budget, the Victorian Government announced the development of an integrated cancer research platform under the umbrella of the Victorian Cancer Agency (BD: May 2, 7, 2012).

The media release said that bowel cancer research would be the first to benefit from the new association with up to 13 sites involved in the project, including clinicians from Royal Melbourne, Western, Austin and Box Hill Hospitals examining whether circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA) was a reliable blood biomarker for the presence of colorectal cancer.

The media release said that up to 900 blood samples would be processed by Biobank staff across all four sites over four years for ctDNA analysis.

Victorian Cancer Biobank chief executive officer Dr Anne Thompson said that “interpreting the clinical usefulness of this biomarker relies on correlating ctDNA levels with the histopathology of the tumor, the treatment given to the patient and imaging results used to monitor effectiveness of treatment”.

“With the link now in place, researchers are able access secure, ethically approved data provided through Biogrid Australia to learn more about disease recurrence and survival,” Dr Thompson said

The media release said that the Biogrid and Biobank data linkage service was available to all Australian researchers.

The Victorian Cancer Biobank and Biogrid said they chose bowel cancer as the first cancer for the collaboration because Australia had one of the highest rates of bowel cancer and it was the second most common type of newly diagnosed cancer and caused the second highest number of cancer deaths in Australia.

The organizations said that about 14,225 Australians were diagnosed with bowel cancer every year and while was one of the most curable types of cancer if detected early, fewer than 40 percent of bowel cancers were detected early.

Ms Turner said the collaboration had other benefits for Victoria, such as attracting foreign pharmaceutical company research.

“While Victoria is actively securing clinical trials to take place in Victoria, trials can and do have their limitations,” Ms Turner said.

“For instance, in bowel cancer research, often older or frail patients are excluded from trials leaving doctors uncertain as to whether trial results are relevant to many of the patients they see in routine practice,” Ms Turner said.

Ms Turner said that Biobank and Biogrid ensured that bio-specimens together with data would inform data analysis across all ages and stages of cancer through translational research projects and multi-centre clinical trials.

“What we have together is a very powerful draw card for attracting international research to Victoria, as larger numbers of patients participating in our services can be amassed more rapidly,” Ms Turner said.

ANTISENSE THERAPEUTICS

Antisense says the European Patent Office has accepted its patent application entitled 'Modulation of insulin like growth factor 1 receptor expression' covering ATL1101

Antisense said the European patent application, covering ATL110 until 2024, would be registered in the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden.

The company said that ATL1101 was a second generation antisense drug that targeted the insulin-like growth factor I receptor and had been shown in animal studies to suppress human prostate tumor growth.

Antisense said that ATL1101 had potential applications in various other cancers as well as indications in certain eye diseases where second generation antisense drugs had shown clinical benefits.

The company said it had an exclusive license to ATL1101 for all uses and applications from its US collaboration partner Isis Pharmaceuticals.

Antisense said the granting of the European patent strengthened "the extensive portfolio of intellectual property protecting ATL1101 and its applications in the treatment of cancer and other diseases" including granted patents in the US, Japan, Australia, NZ and Canada.

The company said that in the US, Japan, Australia and Europe, claims to ATL1101 could be extended up to a further five years once the drug was registered and ATL1101 was also protected by other Isis proprietary antisense technology and manufacturing patents and applications to which it had world-wide licence.

Antisense said it was assessing development and partnering options for ATL1101 and the European patent added further value and should increase its attractiveness to potential partners.

Antisense was up 0.2 cents or 13.3 percent to 1.7 cents with 19 million shares traded.

BIOTA HOLDINGS

Biota says it is in "advanced discussions" with Russell H Plumb to be appointed president and chief executive officer following the merger with Nabi Biopharmaceuticals.

Biota said Mr Plumb's appointment was conditional on the merger succeeding, which was subject to approval from both companies' shareholders at meetings scheduled for later this month (BD: Apr 23, 2012).

The company said the terms, conditions and timing of Mr Plumb's potential employment with the resultant company, Biota Pharmaceuticals Inc, were under discussion and had not been finalized, pending the merger.

Biota said that Mr Plumb rose from chief financial officer of the US-based Inhibitex to president and chief executive officer when it was acquired by Bristol-Myers Squibb for about \$2.5 billion.

The company said that prior to the acquisition Inhibitex was developing antiviral, small molecules, including compounds to treat hepatitis C virus.

Biota said that as chief financial officer, Mr Plumb "oversaw numerous financing transactions, including the company's initial public offering in 2004".

The company said Mr Plumb was expected to be appointed as a director of Biota Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Biota was up 1.5 cents or 2.2 percent to 69 cents.

SIENNA CANCER DIAGNOSTICS

Sienna says it expects to raise \$900,000 through a fully-underwritten placement to existing shareholders.

Sienna said the funds would support the company “through existing licencing negotiations to bring Sienna’s first diagnostic product to market”.

Sienna has been developing a diagnostic method to detect the telomerase protein in cancer cells and earlier this year announced a licence from investor Geron Corp to further develop and commercialize the test (BD: Jan 22, 2012).

In 2010, Sienna appointed Acrux chairman and Starpharma director Ross Dobinson as a director, but Biotech Daily understands Mr Dobinson has left Sienna (BD: Mar 3, 2010).

Today, Sienna said that all directors were participating in the placement.

The company said that the money raised would also be used to complete the current clinical study, commence activities related to manufacture and begin clinical work on the second diagnostic for prostate cancer.

Sienna said that any oversubscriptions would be used principally to drive manufacturing, the key factor controlling the delivery of Sienna’s bladder cancer test.

The company said that the test could be on the market by October 2013.

Sienna is a public unlisted company.