Biotech Daily

Friday February 14, 2014

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

*** ASX UP, BIOTECH DOWN: GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES UP 25%**
- TISSUE THERAPIES DOWN 7%

*** HEARING CRC DEVELOPS SUPER-DIRECTIONAL HEARING AID**

*** FULL FDA APPROVAL FOR CHEMGENEX, TEVA SYNRIBO (OMAPRO)**

*** REPORT PUSHES GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES UP 65% ON NASDAQ**

*** RHINOMED BREATHEASSIST FOR MIGRAINE DRUG DELIVERY**

*** EX-CEO DR PHILLIP COMANS, WIGRAM TAKE 10% OF BIOXYNE**

*** BIO-MELBOURNE HOSTS 'DEVICES AND DIAGNOSTICS LAB'**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market climbed 0.91 percent on Friday February 14, 2014 with the S&P ASX 200 up 48.2 points to 5,356.3 points.

Thirteen of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 17 fell, eight traded unchanged and two were untraded. All three Big Caps were up.

Genetic Technologies was the best, up as much as 2.1 cents or 39.6 percent to 7.4 cents, before closing up 1.3 cents or 24.5 percent at 6.6 cents with 11.4 million shares traded.

Anteo climbed 9.4 percent; Cellmid was up 6.25 percent; both Avita and Phosphagenics were up 4.35 percent; Admedus, Alchemia and Pharmaxis were up more than three percent; Living Cell rose 2.5 percent; CSL, Mesoblast, Prana, QRX and Sirtex were up more than one percent; with Cochlear and Resmed up by less than one percent.

Yesterday's best, Tissue Therapies, led the falls, down 2.5 cents or 6.6 percent to 35.5 cents, with 441,322 shares traded.

Benitec and Universal Biosensors lost more than five percent; Clinuvel, Ellex, Neuren, Patrys and Viralytics fell more than four percent; Antisense and Psivida were down more than three percent; Bionomics and IDT shed more than two percent; Acrux, Nanosonics, Prima and Reva were down one percent or more; with Starpharma down 0.7 percent.

HEARING COOPERATIVE RESEARCH CENTRE

The Hearing Cooperative Research Centre says its Super-directional Beamformer is being evaluated at the University of Melbourne and the National Acoustic Laboratories

The Hearing CRC said that the Super-directional Beamformer was hoped to remove the difficulty of listening to conversations in environments and improve speech understanding by up to 50 percent for hearing aid users.

Hearing CRC research team leader and co-inventor Dr Jorge Mejia said the technology was able to reduce unwanted noise through combining the outputs of two microphones located on each side of the head to create a super-directional output.

“This in effect creates an invisible beam in the direction the hearing aid wearer is facing while reducing noise from the side,” Dr Mejia said. “The wearer can then steer the beam to the left or the right of the head as desired, in the direction of the person speaking.”

University of Melbourne researcher and co-inventor Dr Richard Van Hoesel said the technology would solve the main problem for hearing aid and cochlear implant users, the ability to hear in noisy situations.

“Hearing aid users tend to switch off in those situations as it is too hard to engage,” Dr Van Hoesel said.

“Standard hearing aids work fine in quiet environments, say at home, but are not so great at letting the listener focus in on who is speaking when there is back ground noise in social situations,” Dr Van Hoesel said.

National Acoustics Laboratories director Prof Harvey Dillon said the technology was expected to “change the way the general population think about hearing aids”.

“As well as directly helping the people who use this invention, the super-hearing it offers may eliminate the stigma that some people still associate with hearing aids,” Prof Dillon said.

The Hearing CRC said that the University of Melbourne and the National Acoustic Laboratories would evaluate the Super-directional Beamformer for a range of realistic acoustic settings with a select group of people who wear hearing aids, or cochlear implants, to fine tune the Beamformer’s performance.

The CRC said that the evaluation was expected to be completed in 2014 and provide information needed to be included in hearing aids and cochlear implant systems.

TEVA PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIES (CHEMGENEX)

Teva says that the US Food and Drug Administration has granted full approval of the Chemgenex-developed Synribo or omacetaxine mepesuccinate for injection.

Chemgenex developed omacetaxine mepesuccinate, then known as Omapro, for chronic myeloid leukemia, until the company was acquired by Cephalon, shortly before Teva acquired Cephalon (BD: Oct 22, 2010; May 3, Jun 1, 2011).

In 2012, the FDA approved Synribo under an “accelerated approval program”, based on clinical data showing the drug had an effect on a surrogate endpoint that was reasonably likely to predict a clinical benefit to patients (BD: Dec 5, 2012.

The FDA said at that time that the program provided earlier patient access to promising new drugs while the company conducted additional clinical studies to confirm the drug’s clinical benefit and safe use.

Today Teva said that Synribo was indicated for adult patients with chronic phase or accelerated phase chronic myeloid leukemia with resistance and/or intolerance to two or more tyrosine kinase inhibitors.

On the Nasdaq, Teva was down 22 US cents or 0.5 percent to $US43.85 with 2.9 million shares traded.

GENETIC TECHNOLOGIES

Genetic Technologies jumped as much as 65.0 percent on the Nasdaq overnight following a report from brokers Ladenburg Thalmann with a target price of $US2.50 ($2.78) equivalent to 9.3 cents per Australian share.

Genetic Technologies acting chief executive officer Tom Howitt told Biotech Daily that with 30 Australian shares equal to each American depository receipt (ADR), the 11,181,716 share turnover was “about half of the stock on issue”.

Mr Howitt said that there were 5,814,697 ADRs available for trading at January 31, 2014.

Ladenburg Thalmann said it had re-rated the company from neutral to a buy “based on increased visibility for launch of the second generation Brevagen test with broader ethnic coverage, greater visibility on the [intellectual property] landscape and implementation of steps to trim operating expenses”.

On the Nasdaq, Genetic Technologies closed up 57 US cents or 39.86 percent at $US2.00.

Today on the ASX, Genetic Technologies climbed as much as 2.1 cents or 39.6 percent to 7.4 cents, closing up 1.3 cents or 24.5 percent at 6.6 cents with 11.4 million shares traded.

RHINOMED

Rhinomed says it has begun its drug delivery program, targeting acute migraine by including low-dose sumatriptan in its Breatheassist nasal plugs.

Rhinomed said the nasal technology had “demonstrated acceptance and adoption with consumers in the sporting environment” along with ongoing research in its sleep program.

The company said that sumatriptan had a range of delivery modalities including injection, oral tablets, patches and nasal sprays and its nasal delivery technology provided the ability to deliver a drug into the nasal mucosa over a long period of time delivering a rapid acting solution that was easy for patients to use.

Rhinomed said the migraine market had a high level of dissatisfaction with current delivery modalities and a US online survey of more than 1,300 frequent migraine sufferers showed that 25 percent were satisfied with the range of treatments and many were seeking fast acting, well tolerated, treatment options.

Rhinomed chief executive officer Michael Johnson said the Breatheassist nasal technology had “the very real potential to transform the clinical profile of the leading migraine drug, resulting in a new product candidate that will significantly improve upon current treatment options”.

Rhinomed said that more than 37 million Americans suffered from migraine headaches.

The company said that the triptan class of medications was generally considered the gold standard-of-care with more than 13 million prescriptions written annually.

Rhinomed said the market was dominated by Glaxosmithkline Imitrex, which had peak sales of $1.27 billion in 2008 and the sumatriptan market was highly competitive and subject to significant generic competition.

The company said it would develop a delivery mechanism that not only provided rapid absorption and migraine relief using a low dose sumatriptan powder, but do so in a form that was compelling to both clinicians and patients and provide a clear point of strategic differentiation in a crowded market.

Rhinomed said the in January 2013 Allergan agreed to pay nearly $1 billion to acquire MAP Pharmaceuticals and gain full control of its experimental treatment for migraine headaches and in July 2013 Optinose signed a licencing deal worth up to $110 million for its experimental migraine headache treatment.

Rhinomed was up 0.3 cents or 6.8 percent to 4.7 cents with 3.3 million shares traded.

BIOXYNE

Former Bioxyne chief executive officer Dr Phillip Comans has increased his substantial holding in the company from 13,585,626 shares (9.06%) to 19,835,626 shares (6.2%).
Through Wigram Trading, Dr Comans said the 6,250,000 shares were acquired “in lieu of [$37,500] remuneration owed as chief executive officer” or 0.6 cents a share.
Bioxyne was untraded at 0.8 cents.

BIO-MELBOURNE NETWORK

The Bio-Melbourne Network will host a one day ‘Devices and Diagnostics Lab’ on February 20, 2014.
The Bio-Melbourne Network said that the laboratory would “provide a focus on wireless digital health and discuss the challenges, issues and opportunities that have arisen with the development of these disruptive technologies”.
The Network said the sessions would explore regulatory issues, alternative finance sources, future technologies, design and clinically-based solutions for improved patient care and maintaining good health.
The Bio-Melbourne Network said that speakers included Melbourne Health business development director Steve Christov, BUPA Australia’s head of clinical advisory Dr Stan Goldstein, Telstra Health product lead Izaak Du Plooy and SPRIM Australia and NZ managing director Becky Hyde.
The Network said the ‘Devices and Diagnostics Lab’ would be held at the Shell Petroleum Conference Centre, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne.
Registration is from 8:30am, the sessions run from 9am to 5:30pm followed by networking drinks.
To register online go to http://www.biomelbourne.org/events/view/306.