



Biotech Daily

Tuesday May 20, 2008

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

- * **ASX, BIOTECHS DOWN:
STARPHARMA UP 9%; TISSUE THERAPIES DOWN 14%**
- * **EVADO LAUNCHES SAFE CHEAP CLINICAL TRIALS SOFTWARE**
- * **LARGE STUDY BACKS ATCOR'S CENTRAL BP MEASURE**
- * **VICTORIA: 'FUNDING ATTRACTS RESEARCHERS, BOOSTS ECONOMY'**
- * **EUROPEAN PATENT FOR VIRALYTICS' ANTI-CANCER COXSACKIE VIRUS**
- * **AGENIX APPOINTS PHILIPPINES DISTRIBUTOR**
- * **PHOSPHAGENICS APPOINTS FRED BANTI V-P BUSINESS**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market fell 0.7 percent on Tuesday May 20, 2008 with the All Ordinaries down 40.1 points to 5,994.9 points.

Ten of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 17 fell, six traded unchanged and seven were untraded.

Starpharma was best, up three cents or 9.38 percent to 35 cents on moderate volumes, followed by Prana up 2.5 cents or 6.49 percent to 41 cents.

Pharmaxis climbed 5.03 percent; Neuren and Psivida were both up 4.76 percent to 11 cents; Proteome was up 3.85 percent; with Agenix, Avexa, Cochlear and Living Cell up more than one percent.

Tissue Therapies led the falls down two cents or 13.79 percent to 12.5 cents on small volumes, followed by Polartech down 10.0 percent.

Heartware lost 8.18 percent; Antisense shed 6.41 percent; Bionomics fell 5.26 percent; Benitec, Novogen and Portland fell more than four percent; Optiscan was down 3.7 percent; Acrux, Alchemia, Clinuvel and Stem Cell shed more than two percent; with Arana and Progen down more than one percent.

EVADO

Melbourne-based Evado has launched its clinical trials software claiming it increases data accuracy by 60 percent at a vastly reduced price.

At the launch at the Centre of Health Innovation at the Alfred Hospital, Evado chief executive officer Jennie Anderson said the preclinical version of the web-based system was \$14,000 rising to \$35,000 depending on the nature of the clinical trial.

A poster at the launch said "Evado has 80 percent of the data functionality of bigger systems for 20 percent of the cost".

Evado said the launch was on "world clinical trials day" recognizing May 20, 1747 when James Lind began a controlled trial to treat scurvy.

The company said the web-based system could be operated from a personal computer, lap-top or computer tablet.

Ms Anderson said that Evado was in "contract negotiations" with a major pharmaceutical company and a cancer institute on using the equipment for large scale clinical trials and told the audience at the launch that her company would give away one complete software package to a not-for-profit organization engaged in serious research.

Ventracor's chief scientific officer Dr John Woodard, said his company had bought the system last November and was using the software for trials of its left ventricular assist device and described previously having to keep "pallets of paper" for US Food and Drug Administration registration purposes.

Dr Woodard said "big American databases were big, clumsy and enormously expensive for small companies to customize".

He said the Evado system made programming relatively easy.

"We can put pictures, traces and x-rays in the database that bigger systems can't do.

We're a very keen supporter," Dr Woodard said.

The software's developer, Ross Anderson said that being web-based meant never having to worry about a back-up and told of "one big pharma" who lost a lap-top computer with 5,000 patients' records over two years of a clinical trial.

"That doesn't happen with us," Mr Anderson said.

He said the Evado system can monitor and store data for global trials and for numerous trials at any one time, as well as determine which users can have access to which trial and level of patient and subject data.

"We can store two billion records," Mr Anderson said.

He said the Evado system exceeded FDA requirements and its data was compatible and transferable to other systems.

The director of the Monash University Centre for Ethics in Medicine and Society and the Clinical Ethics Service at the Alfred Hospital Prof Paul Komesaroff said the Evado system came from the germ of an idea and the "sense among clinical researchers for the need for a more flexible and accessible collection of data".

He said the alternatives were either prohibitively expensive systems or the arduous collection of data, particularly in clinical trials of information and the use of simple, manually operated software such as XL spreadsheets, with the high risk of data error.

He said the Evado system met the requirements of easy data handling with "safety, confidentiality as well as transparency".

"There is a need for a seamless process to manage data in a reliable safe and transparent way. It can be tailored to different requirements from single researcher to multi-national trials and all that is for the community's benefit.

The Evado software is supported by Microsoft's health and human services and was developed with Intel, La Trobe University and the Victorian Government.

For more information about the software or the free system go to www.evado.com.

[ATCOR](#)

Atcor says a 10,000 patient trial shows that its Sphygmocor central blood pressure measure is superior for assessing high risk patients.

Atcor said more than 70 per cent of patients identified as having “high-normal” blood pressure through traditional sphygmomanometer cuff blood pressure measurement may be at risk because they have elevated central blood pressure associated with increased incidence of heart attack, stroke and kidney disease.

Atcor said the Anglo Cardiff Collaborative Trial, a cooperative effort of the Universities of Cambridge and Cardiff, tracked the blood pressure of 10,613 patients with a traditional arm cuff and non-invasive central blood pressure assessment using Atcor’s Sphygmocor which measures a radial or wrist pulse and applies an algorithm.

Atcor said investigators found that more than 70 percent of patients with brachial blood pressure in the “high normal” or “pre hypertension” range had central blood pressures corresponding to those seen in patients with stage one hypertension.

Treatment guidelines call for anti-hypertensive drug therapy for stage one hypertension whereas life-style changes only are guided in pre-hypertension. Elevated central pressure was also associated with an increase in cardiovascular risk factors.

Atcor said the results were available online and would be published in the June issue of American Heart Association’s Hypertension journal in a study entitled ‘Central Pressure: Variability and Impact of Cardiovascular Risk Factors?’.

The company said the findings confirmed two previous studies, which showed that individuals with elevated central pressure were at a significantly higher risk of heart attack, stroke and kidney disease. In both studies, elevated central pressure in patients could not be predicted by conventional brachial blood pressure measurement.

Lead author Dr Carmel McEniery said the significance of the findings was that central and brachial blood pressures were not the same and central pressure should be assessed.

“Current guidelines for the diagnosis and management of hypertension are based solely on brachial pressure, yet this results in a large number of individuals being mis-classified based on their central pressure, leading to sub-optimal treatment, Dr McEniery said.

“By assessing central pressure, the identification and treatment of patients with elevated risk is likely to be improved,” she said.

Atcor was up 0.2 cents or 2.27 percent to nine cents.

[VICTORIA GOVERNMENT](#)

Victoria’s Innovation Minister Gavin Jennings says a Government-commissioned report has found that spending on innovation attracts researchers.

Mr Jennings said the science and technology innovation achievements report found that the Government’s actions had “resulted in the establishment of world-class research infrastructure” which was attracting researchers and boosting economic competitiveness.

Mr Jennings said the report by Deloitte Insight Economics analyzed the performance of Victorian Science, Technology and Innovation projects (STI) delivered by the State Government since 1999.

“The Brumby Government is taking action to support innovation and has committed over \$2.1 billion to its innovation agenda, the largest such commitment of any State Government,” Mr Jennings said.

“As the Deloitte report makes clear, this has positioned Victoria as national science and technology leader with a strong and growing international reputation as well,” he said.

“The report shows research bodies are attracted by Victoria’s research infrastructure and the human capital available to them,” Mr Jennings said.

"The report shows that in 2005-'06, 281 highly skilled researchers were attracted to Victoria through STI supported projects, 155 from overseas and 126 from interstate," Mr Jennings said.

The report said there was increased confidence among Victoria's research community, along with the growth of collaboration between researchers and industry.

Economic gains include the development of carbon fibre composites with Victoria becoming a key supplier of aircraft components for Airbus and Boeing, Mr Jennings said. Victoria won the largest share of National Health and Medical Research Council grants and more than 370 patents had been filed by Victorian initiatives.

"These outcomes and more like them are above and beyond the \$3.9 billion boost in GSP over the 2000-2014 period forecast by an earlier Allen Consulting Group study in 2003. The report is available at www.innovation.vic.gov.au

VIRALYTICS

The European Patent Office has allowed Viralytics patent application for the use of its family of coxsackie viruses for the treatment of cancers expressing the ICAM-1 molecule. The patent is expected to be granted in the next six months.

Viralytics said the granted patent would provide protection over the exclusive use in Europe of its family of four coxsackie A group viruses in the treatment of ICAM-1 bearing cancers until 2020.

Viralytics director and inventor of the technology Prof Darren Shafren said the patent when granted would be similar to the patent granted in the US announced on April 23, 2008 and covered the company's core technology.

"Numerous cancers have elevated levels of ICAM-1 on their cell surfaces and the presence of ICAM-1 allows our family of viruses to lock onto the surface of cancer cells to infect and destroy them as described in our patent," Prof Shafren said.

"It is important to note that this patent not only covers the company's Cavatak product which is currently undergoing two phase I mono-therapy trials in melanoma, breast and prostate cancer but also the other three coxsackie families of viruses in the company's intellectual property portfolio," Prof Shafren said.

Viralytics climbed 0.3 cents or 4.41 percent to 7.1 cents.

AGENIX

Agenix has appointed Xeno Pharmaceuticals as its distributor in the Philippines.

Agenix said it would export Adefovir Dipivoxil to countries where hepatitis B was rampant. Xeno chief executive officer Lito Tadena said it was "the first novel generic for the treatment of chronic B hepatitis".

In the Philippines, it is estimated that 9.0 million people have chronic hepatitis B infection. Many Filipino children remain unvaccinated and many adults may be chronic carriers. Although most hepatitis B carriers have no symptoms, they can still transmit the infection and develop liver cancer.

Liver cancer caused by chronic hepatitis B infection is the second most common cancer in Filipino men. The current market of oral anti-hepatitis B vaccine treatment is \$5 million

Xeno said it expected to capture up to 30 percent of the market share.

No one was available at Agenix in Singapore or Queensland to explain whether Adefovir Dipivoxil was related to Youheding, the company's lead drug which has been registered for hepatitis B in China.

Agenix climbed 0.1 cents or 1.23 percent to 8.2 cents.

PHOSPHAGENICS

Phosphagenics has appointed Fred Banti as senior vice-president and chief business officer.

Phosphagenics chief executive officer Harry Rosen said Mr Banti's "thorough understanding of the drug development and commercialization process" would strengthen the company's business and corporate development.

"Mr Banti has more than 27 years' experience as a pharmaceutical executive with strong management credentials in corporate, business and strategy development, portfolio and project management, commercial assessments and research and development," Mr Rosen said.

Mr Banti has worked for Novartis Oncology and Pharmacia (now Pfizer) and will be based in New York.

Phosphagenics was unchanged at 13 cents.