Biotech Daily

Friday August 7, 2009

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

*** ASX, BIOTECH DOWN: COMPUMEDICS UP 8%, GENETIC TECH DOWN 19%**

*** OPTISCAN'S CONFOCAL MICROSCOPE 'EXQUISITE' IN NEUROSURGERY**

*** RESMED PROFIT UP 33% TO $175m**

*** BIO-MELBOURNE SEPTEMBER BREAKFAST: FINDING GRANTS**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market retreated 0.62 percent on Friday August 7, 2009 with the S&P ASX 200 down 26.9 points to 4299.2 points.

Eight of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 10 fell, six traded unchanged and 16 were untraded.

Compumedics was best, up one cent or 8.3 percent to 13 cents with 68,900 shares traded, followed by Tissue Therapies up four percent to 26 cents.

Alchemia and Clinuvel climbed more than three percent; Biota, Resmed and Sirtex rose more than two percent; Nanosonics and Psivida were up more than one percent; with Cochlear up 0.9 percent.

Genetic Technologies led the falls, down 1.2 cents or 19.05 percent to 5.1 cents with 46,000 shares traded.

Circadian and Novogen lost more than five percent; Cytopia and Phosphagenics fell more than four percent; Benitec, Chemgenex, Pharmaxis and Universal Biosensors were down more than three percent; Bionomics, Living Cell, Optiscan and Progen shed more than two percent; with Acrux, Cellestis and Mesoblast down by less than one percent.

OPTISCAN

A paper published by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons says Optiscan's confocal microscope has potential for neuropathology and neurosurgery.

Optiscan chief executive officer Vicki Tutungi told Biotech Daily that it was the first time her company's work with Carl Zeiss on neurosurgery, ear, nose and throat surgery and spinal surgery had been disclosed.

The Optiscan collaboration with Carl Zeiss began in 2007 and earlier this year the American Association of Neurological Surgeons published an abstract of a conference presentation entitled 'In Vivo Hand-held Confocal Microscopy for Neurosurgery: Results in an Experimental GBM Model' authored by a team led by the University of Alberta Division of Neurosurgery's Dr Tejas Sankar.

The abstract was first published on May 4, 2009 and described the use of Optiscan's confocal microscope for neurosurgery.

It is available at http://www.aans.org/library/article.aspx?ArticleId=54813.

The research team said that with the development of miniaturized components for confocal microscopy, clinical confocal imaging applications had emerged, including assessment of colonic mucosal dysplasia during colonoscopy.

The Dr Sankar led team which presented its "initial experience with handheld, miniaturized confocal imaging in a brain tumor model".

The abstract said C57bl/6 mice were implanted intracranially with 10^5 GL261 glioblastoma cells and at 14 and 21 days post-implantation, the brains of anesthetized mice were exposed surgically and the brain surface was imaged using a hand-held confocal probe affixed to a stereotactic frame.

The paper said the probe was moved systematically over regions of normal and tumor-containing tissue and that intravenous fluorescein and topical acriflavine were contrast agents.

The paper said that biopsies were obtained at each imaging site beneath the probe for histology.

"Exquisite images were acquired and correlated well with corresponding histology of cellular shape and tissue architecture in brain infiltrated by neoplasm," the abstract said.

"Reproducible patterns of cortical vasculature and normal grey and white matter were identified," the paper said.

"Imaging was distinguished between tumor and non-tumor tissue, including infiltrative tumor margins," the abstract said.

"Margins were easily identified by observers without prior neuropathology training after a minimum experience with the technology," it said.

"Striking image 'loops' were acquired revealing blood flow through normal and abnormal vessels and tumor tissue associations," the abstract said.

The team concluded that Optiscan's confocal imaging technology had "significant potential to assist in detecting infiltrative brain tumor margins during surgery, avoiding sampling error during biopsy of heterogeneous glial neoplasms and supplementing conventional intraoperative frozen section pathology".

"Clinical trials assessing the impact for surgical technique, diagnosis, and workflow between neurosurgeon and neuropathologist are warranted on the basis of these promising initial results," the team said.

Ms Tutungi said the evaluation of her company's technology was "arms length" with Zeiss providing the research team a loan of the equipment for evaluation.

Optiscan said the Zeiss collaboration provided new product lines to the existing use by endoscopists in gastroenterology.

Optiscan fell 0.2 cents or 2.78 percent to seven cents.

RESMED

Resmed has posted a record net profit after tax for the year to June 30, 2009 up 33 percent to $US146.4 million ($A174.6 million) on revenue up 10 percent to $US920.7 million.

Resmed said that the increase was equivalent to a 15 percent increase on “a constant currency basis”.

The company said revenue for the three months to June 30, 2009 was a record $US252 million, a 10 percent increase compared to the previous corresponding period.

Diluted earnings per share was $US1.90, an increase of 36 percent compared to the previous year.

Resmed chief executive officer Kieran Gallahue said the company’s 20th fiscal year in business was “a successful one with sustained sales performance throughout all regions, gains in capturing market share and a key focus on cost efficiencies across our global organization”.

Resmed was up 15 cents or 2.94 percent to $5.25

BIO-MELBOURNE NETWORK

The Bio-Melbourne Network says its September 8, 2009 Bio-Breakfast will examine the range of grants available and what grant assessors want to know.

The Bio-Melbourne Network said there were many grants available for developing, promoting and exporting biotechnology products and services, ranging from $50,000 to $5 million.

The Network said finding and applying for government grants was time consuming and many businesses could not afford to spend valuable time and effort trawling through government websites or reading hundreds of pages of program information.

But the Bio-Melbourne Network said “a grant may mean the difference between success and failure for many ventures”.

The Network said Grantready’s chief executive officer Adrian Spencer will focus on the different types of grants available, how to get them and how to avoid common pitfalls.

The Bio-Melbourne Network said Grantready was a private company matching grants to applicants.

The Network said Victoria’s Commercialisation of Emerging Technology (Comet) grant advisor Bob Beaumont would explain the importance of a quality team in securing funding and would share his experience as a grants assessor.

The September 8, 2009 Bio-Breakfast will be held in the Supper Room, Melbourne Town Hall, Swanston St, Melbourne.

Registration is from 7:15am with presentations at 8am.

For further information or to book online go to www.biomelbourne.org, email Anita Petris at apetris@biomelbourne.org or call +613 9650 8800.