Biotech Daily

Tuesday September 5, 2017

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

*** ASX, BIOTECH EVEN: USCOM UP 9%, DIMERIX DOWN 10%**

*** ORTHOCELL TREATS 1st ORTHO-ATI ROTATOR CUFF PATIENT**

*** STARPHARMA: ANSELL CHINA CONDOM SALE 'VIVAGEL OPPORTUNITY'**

*** PRIMA JAPAN PATENT FOR IMP321 FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

*** DIMERIX EXTENDED RELEASE PROPAGERMANIUM FOR TRIALS**

*** INVION PROCEEDS WITH CHO GROUP CONTROL, NGPDT FOR CANCER**

*** PHYLOGICA FUNCTIONAL PEPTIDES: 'MORE DRUG TO MORE TARGETS'**

*** VICTORIAN COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTRE 1st CONFERENCE**

*** LIFESPOT APPOINTS EX-SIMAVITA CEO PHILIPPA LEWIS CHAIRMAN**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market edged up 0.07 percent on Tuesday September 5, 2017 with the ASX200 up 4.2 points to 5,706.2 points.

Twelve of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 12 fell, 11 traded unchanged and five were untraded. All three Big Caps were up by less than one percent.

Uscom was the best, up 1.5 cents or 9.1 percent to 18 cents with 100 shares traded.

Prima climbed 4.55 percent with 3.1 million shares traded; Bionomics and Prana were up more than three percent; Mesoblast, Nanosonics and Starpharma rose more than two percent; with Ellex, ITL, Orthocell, Pro Medicus and Sirtex up one percent or more.

Dimerix led the falls, down 0.1 cents or 10.0 percent to 0.9 cents with 863,215 shares traded.

Cellmid lost eight percent; Benitec fell four percent; Admedus was down 3.7 percent; Clinuvel fell 2.1 percent; Airxpanders, Avita, Impedimed, Universal Biosensors and Viralytics were down more than one percent; with Medical Developments and Psivida down by less than one percent.

ORTHOCELL

Orthocell says it has treated its first of 30 patients in its trial of Ortho-ATI compared to corticosteroid injection for the treatment of rotator cuff tendinopathy and shoulder tear.
In May, Orthocell said it received ethics approval for the randomized, controlled study comparing autologous tenocyte implantation (Ortho-ATI) tendon regeneration to corticosteroid injection (BD: May 1, 2017).
Orthocell said the studied aimed to demonstrate the safety and feasibility of Ortho-ATI for shoulder rotator cuff tendinopathy and tear and would be performed in collaboration with Johnson & Johnson's DePuy Synthes Products, a collaboration facilitated by Johnson & Johnson Innovation.
The company said the study, entitled 'Defining a randomized, controlled study of Ortho-ATI versus corticosteroid injection for treatment of rotator cuff tendinopathy and tear' would be led by its chief scientific officer Prof Ming Hao Zheng and the Australian Elbow and Shoulder Society president Prof Allan Wang.
Orthocell said that rotator cuff tendinopathy and tear was a common and difficult injury to treat with more than 50 percent of adults over 50 years of age affected.
The company said that rotator cuff disease led to disability, reduced quality of life, absenteeism from work and was a burden on healthcare resources.
Orthocell said that patients would have failed previous conservative treatment options, including physiotherapy and other injection therapies.
Orthocell managing-director Paul Anderson said that demonstrating the efficacy of Ortho-ATI for rotator cuff tendinopathy was "an important element of our product development and partnering strategy".
"We expect results to show Ortho-ATI is a durable and effective treatment for degenerate shoulder injuries," Mr Anderson said.
Orthocell was up 0.5 cents or 1.7 percent to 30.5 cents.

STARPHARMA

Starpharma says that the sale of Ansell's condom business to Humanwell Healthcare Group and Citic Capital China Partners III was "an opportunity" for its Vivagel condom".
In an announcement to the ASX, Ansell said all conditions and regulatory approvals for the $US600 million transaction had been satisfied and sale proceeds received, with the exception of some pre-completion conditions relating to Ansell's Brazilian condom business, Blowtex.
Starpharma chief executive officer Dr Jackie Fairley told Biotech Daily that Humanwell planned "to invest aggressively in the condom business".
"Starpharma foresees an increase in marketing support across products and brands," Dr Fairley said.
"Humanwell's track record of success in China and the Asian region more broadly, together with Ansell's strong and growing Asian condom brands provides an ideal combination in these developing markets," Dr Fairley said.
The company said that for the year to June 30, 2017 Ansell reported more than 30 percent sales growth in China for the sexual wellness division, which included the Jissbon condom brand.
Dr Fairley said that a relationship with Humanwell would allow it to leverage the Vivagel condom regulatory approval process in China, across both the branded condom market with Humanwell and the government sector with partner Sky and Land.
Starpharma was up two cents or two percent to $1.01.

PRIMA BIOMED

Prima says the Japan Patent Office has granted a patent covering the use of its lead candidate IMP321 in the treatment of infectious diseases.
Prima said that the patent, entitled 'Use of Recombinant LAG-3 or the Derivatives thereof for Eliciting Monocyte Immune Response' was filed as a divisional application and followed the grant of the Japanese parent patent issued in April 2016 and would provide intellectual property protection until October 3, 2028.
The company said that the patent claims were for IMP321 to be used alone or in combination with an anti-infectious chemotherapeutic agent or anti-infectious immunotherapeutic agent to induce an increase in monocyte, a type of white blood cell, numbers to protect against infectious disease.
Prima said the patent implied broader potential for IMP321 as an immune stimulant and provided protection in Japan for additional possible clinical indications, beyond cancer.
Prima was up 0.1 cents or 4.55 percent to 2.3 cents with 3.1 million shares traded.

DIMERIX

Dimerix says that manufacturing has been scheduled for later this month to produce an extended release propagermanium tablet for its DMX-200 human trials.
Dimerix said that DMX-200 was being developed as an adjunct therapy for chronic kidney disease, combining propagermanuim which was approved and marketed in Japan as a tablet taken with the standard-of-care blood pressure medication irbesartan, which patients were already taking.
The company said the tablet would be used in a pharmaco-kinetic and a phase IIb study.
Dimerix said its phase IIa trial used immediate-release propagermanium capsules which patients were required to take three times per day.
The company said that an extended release formulation of propagermanium was expected to be suitable as a twice daily medication, eliminating the need for a middle of the day tablet and providing new intellectual property.
Dimerix chief executive officer Kathy Harrison said that doctors had "indicated that it is important in a commercial tablet for the dosage form to be taken no more than twice per day as, above this, there is often a dramatic drop off in compliance".
Dimerix fell 0.1 cents or 10.0 percent to 0.9 cents.

INVION

Invion says that ASX Listing Rules 11.1.2 and 11.1.3 will not apply to the proposed change of control to the Cho Group and distribution deal (BD: Aug 31, 2017).
The company said it intended to proceed with the strategic transaction in accordance with the previously announced indicative timetable.
Last Thursday, Invion said it would licence "new generation photo dynamic therapy" (NGPDT) for cancers from the Cho Group for $5.5 million in shares at 0.2 cents a share, it would be the exclusive distributor and licencee in Australia and New Zealand for the technology and would conduct research and development of the technology, initially targeting prostate cancer and the Cho Group would provide non-dilutive trial funding.
Invion has a market capitalization of $2,911,931.
On Friday, Invion requested a trading halt pending the ASX's determination as to whether the company will be required to comply with ASX Listing Rules 11.1.2 and/or 11.1.3 relating to "significant changes to activities" (BD: Sep 1, 2017).
Invion climbed 0.05 cents or 20.0 percent to 0.3 cents.

PHYLOGICA

Phylogica says its functional penetrating peptide platform is intended to deliver drug cargoes inside cells providing access to 10 times as many drug targets.
Phylogica said that for the next four months it would focus on expanding the number of functional penetrating peptides that had the ability to deliver drug cargo into cells.
The company said that its lead peptide was about 40 times as effective as the previous gold standard intracellular drug delivery technology, the trans-activating transcriptional activator, or TAT.
Phylogica said its peptides achieved the improved performance “due to their ability to escape from the endosomes that are formed around them as they are transported across the cell membrane”.
The company said that release from the endosome was a major challenge with intracellular drug delivery and “the critical hurdle in accessing this high value environment to deliver therapeutics”.
Phylogica said its previous lead functional penetrating peptide (FPP) was outperformed by five new peptides with FPP49 performing the best at a range of concentrations.
The company said that a second experiment measured the overall uptake in the cell and how much of the enzyme was delivered, showing the peptide’s ability to cross the cell membrane with delivery of the attached cargo inside the cell.
Phylogica chief scientific officer Dr Rob Hayes said the research team had identified more potent peptides and demonstrated they could import an active cargo.
Phylogica chief executive officer Stephanie Unwin said the company intended to identify “a fleet of [peptides] with potency and cell reach, providing a platform for selecting an FPP that delivers a commercial product into the intracellular environment where the target is located”.
“We are confident that this work gives the company a model for near term commercial value, and will be validated when the FPPs are demonstrated to work by delivering a functional cargo in the live animal models expected to be completed [by April] 2018,” Ms Unwin said.
Phylogica fell 0.2 cents or 4.3 percent to 4.5 cents with 1.4 million shares traded.

VICTORIAN COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTRE

The Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre says it will host its inaugural research conference in Melbourne from September 17 to 19, 2017.
The Cancer Centre said that it would host 76 experts, speaking on immunotherapy, genetics and personalized medicine and new prevention protocols in attendance.
The VCCC said that the conference covered the latest knowledge and directions in cancer research and would highlight the research strengths of its 10 alliance partners.
Speakers include Nobel Prize winner and Salk Institute president Prof Elizabeth Blackburn, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center chief executive officer Prof Craig Thompson, NHS England national cancer director Cally Palmer and Newcastle University (UK), professor of clinical genetics Prof Sir John Burn.
The Cancer Centre said that its 10 research and institutions included the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne Health including the Royal Melbourne Hospital, the University of Melbourne, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, the Royal Women’s Hospital, the Royal Children’s Hospital, Western Health, Melbourne’s St Vincent’s Hospital including St Vincent's Institute, Austin Health including the Olivia Newton-John Cancer Research Institute and Austin Lifesciences and Murdoch Children’s Research Institute.
The program is available at: www.vccc-conference.org.

LIFESPOT HEALTH

Lifespot says it has appointed former Simavita chief executive officer Philippa Lewis as its chairman effective from September 1, 2017.

In 2013, Simavita raised $14 million at 41 cents a share to list of the ASX to commercialize its smart incontinence management (SIM) system, reporting $350,831 in revenue for the six months to December 31, 2015 and $778,574 for the 12 months to June 30, 2015, with the 2015 annual report saying that Ms Lewis was paid $601,448 for the year to June 30, 2015 (BD Dec 3, 2013, Aug 20, 2015).

Last year, Simavita told the ASX that Michael Spooner and Dr Gary Pace would replace chairman Michael Brown and Ms Lewis, when the company was trading at 4.5 cents a share (BD: Apr 27, 2016).

Today, Lifespot said that Ms Lewis had more than over 20 years' experience in the medical technologies and healthcare industries, founding "multiple private and publicly listed start-up enterprises and held roles as professional company director, corporate advisor and as a global health and aged care industry specialist".

The company said that Ms Lewis had experience in digital consumer healthcare commercialization with skills in licencing, mergers and acquisitions, capital management, intellectual property, media and communications, international joint ventures and big data.

Lifespot said that Ms Lewis was currently the chairman of Karista Pty Ltd and The Big Smoke Media Group, as well as a chief executive officer mentor for the Australian Technology Competition and was appointed as a grants assessor for the Federal Government-funded Medtech and Pharmaceutical Growth Centre, or MTP Connect.

The company said it operated in the digital health sector and was focused on developing and commercializing medical diagnostic and monitoring technology, including the Bodytel and Lifespot Skin systems.

Lifespot was untraded at 15 cents.