



Biotech Daily

Thursday March 26, 2020

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

- * ASX, BIOTECH UP: UNIVERSAL BIO UP 23%; IMMUTEP DOWN 32%
- * COCHLEAR PLACEMENT RAISES \$880m ABOVE EXPECTED \$800m
- * SOMNOMED INSTITUTIONAL OFFER RAISES \$9.7m
- * RESPIRI PLACEMENT RAISES \$2m, PLAN FOR \$1m MORE
- * ALTERITY PLACEMENT RAISES \$123k
- * IMMUTEP: IMP321, PACLITAXEL FAILS BREAST CANCER ENDPOINTS
- * MCRI 4k HEALTH WORKER TB VACCINE TRIAL FOR COVID-19
- * MICRO-X: COVID-19 RAMPS DEMAND FOR DRX NANO, PRODUCTION UP
- * MEDADVISOR COVID-19 DELIVERY SERVICE FOR AT-RISK PATIENTS
- * TALI DIGITAL: 13.9% OF CHILDREN SHOW INATTENTIVE PERFORMANCE
- * CARDIEX INCREASES BAYER CONTRACT \$423k
- * ALLEGRA: 'COVID-19 HITS REVENUE'
- * BTC WITHDRAWS H1 GUIDANCE DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS
- * ACTINOGEN: 'COVID-19 HALTS OCCUPANCY STUDY ENROLMENT'
- * EXOPHARM: 'COVID-19 REVISES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS'
- * GENETIC SIGNATURES REQUESTS 'COVID-19 TESTING' TRADING HALT
- * CRESO DELIVERS 1st CANNAQIX SHIPMENT TO SOUTH AFRICA
- * BENITEC MEETING APPROVES US MOVE
- * AVECHO DEFERS AGM; ASIC COVID-19 ADVICE
- * KARST PEAK 'TAKES' AUCKLAND TRUST'S 14% OF NEUREN
- * LIFESPOT REQUESTS ASX PRICE QUERY TRADING HALT
- * LITTLE GREEN PHARMA WA FACILITY COMMISSIONED
- * MGC DAILY MARIJUANA COVID-19 J-V SUSPENSION EXTENSION
- * FERRIS, KNOWLES REPLACE MRCF STOCKDALE; BEATTIE DIRECTOR
- * NOXOPHARM APPOINTS BORIS PATKIN DIRECTOR

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market was up 2.3 percent on Thursday March 26, 2020, with the ASX200 up 115.2 points to 5,113.3 points. Twenty-five of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 11 fell and four traded unchanged. All three Big Caps were up.

Universal Biosensors was the best, up three cents or 23.1 percent to 16 cents, with 20,226 shares traded. Medical Developments climbed 21.6 percent; Optiscan improved 20 percent; Avita was up 18.5 percent; Antisense rose 16.7 percent; Pharmaxis and Volpara climbed more than 13 percent; Imugene improved 11.1 percent; Cynata and Opthea were up more than 10 percent; Starpharma was up 9.8 percent; Cochlear and Mesoblast were up more than eight percent; Paradigm and Polynovo improved more than seven percent; Actinogen, Compumedics, CSL, Nanosonics and Telix were up more than six percent; Neuren and Next Science were up five percent or more; Orthocell and Pro Medicus climbed more than four percent; Prescient was up 3.85 percent; Genetic Signatures and Resmed rose more than two percent; with Ellex up 1.9 percent.

Immutep led the falls for the second day in a row, losing a further 5.5 cents or 32.35 percent to 11.5 cents with 13.7 million shares traded, or 61.7 percent in two days. Cyclopharm lost 12.2 percent; Dimerix and Osprey fell eight percent or more; Amplia was down 6.7 percent; Alterity retreated 5.6 percent; LBT and Proteomics fell more than four percent; Uscom was down 3.7 percent; Resonance retreated 2.3 percent; with Clinuvel down 1.95 percent.

COCHLEAR

Cochlear says it has raised \$880 million through a fully underwritten institutional placement at \$140 a share, \$80 million more than the expected \$800 million. Yesterday, Cochlear said it hoped to raise \$800 million through a placement, \$50 million through a share plan and would borrow \$150 million (BD: Mar 25, 2020). Cochlear was up \$14.17 or 8.4 percent to \$182.17 with 788,306 shares traded.

SOMNOMED

Somnomed says it has raised \$9,680,000 through the institutional component of its one-for-3.24 accelerated non-renounceable entitlement offer at 80 cents a share. Yesterday, Somnomed said it hoped to raise a total of \$15.5 million through an institutional and retail entitlement offer at 80 cents a share, a 60 percent discount to the \$2.00 closing price on March 17, 2020 (BD: Mar 25, 2020). Today, the company said the shortfall had been placed to TDM Growth Partners and it hoped to raise a further \$5.8 million in the retail rights offer. Somnomed fell 46.7 cents or 27.2 percent to \$1.25.

RESPIRI

Respiri says it has raised \$2 million through a placement at 5.5 cents a share and hopes to raise a further \$1 million through a share purchase plan at the same price. Respiri said the price was a 25.6 percent discount to the March 17 closing price, directors had committed \$450,000 to the placement pending approval, the record date was March 25, the offer would open on April 10 and close on May 1, 2020. Respiri was in a suspension at 7.4 cents.

ALTERITY THERAPEUTICS

Alterity says it has raised \$123,251 through a placement at 1.75 cents a share for working capital and to progress research activities.

In an announcement entitled 'Proposed issue of Securities', Alterity said the 7,042,920 shares would be issued tomorrow March 27, 2020.

Alterity fell 0.1 cents or 5.6 percent to 1.7 cents.

IMMUTEP

Immutep slides show that its 226-patient, phase IIb paclitaxel with IMP321 trial for metastatic breast cancer failed to meet its primary and secondary endpoints.

Last year, Immutep said the primary endpoint for the active immunotherapy paclitaxel with IMP321 (Aipac) trial for metastatic breast was progression-free survival according to response evaluation criteria in solid tumors as evaluated by blinded independent readers (BD: Jun 25, 2019)

The company said at that time that the secondary endpoints included progression-free survival, overall response rate and overall survival.

Immutep said the trial enrolled patients with human epidermal receptor 2 (HER2) negative and hormone receptor (HR) positive metastatic breast cancer, who were not eligible for HER2 therapies.

Yesterday, Immutep released percentage improvements claiming that paclitaxel and IMP321 was superior to paclitaxel and placebo, but did not publish the number of patients nor statistical significance data.

Immutep said patients receiving IMP321 with paclitaxel had better outcomes and 63 percent were progression-free at six months, compared to 54 percent of those receiving paclitaxel and a placebo (BD: Mar 25, 2020).

Today, on page 11 of 20 slides in a presentation, Immutep said IMP321 did not meet statistical significance for progression-free survival ($p = 0.341$) but said that 63 percent (71.82 patients) of the 114-patient IMP321 group were progression free at six months compared to 54 percent (60.48 patients) of 112 patients in the placebo group.

Other slides of sub-group analyses by blinded independent readers also showed no statistically significant benefit.

The company said there was a higher overall response rate of 48.3 percent in the paclitaxel and IMP321 group compared to 38.4 percent in the paclitaxel and placebo group and a similarly higher disease control rate of 85.1 percent compared to 75.9 percent, but did not provide a statistical significance "p" probability value for either outcome.

Immutep said that 0.9 percent (one patient) of the paclitaxel and IMP321 arm had a complete response compared to 1.8 percent (two patients) in the paclitaxel and placebo arm.

The company said the combination therapy was safe and well tolerated, and in the first months of treatment with paclitaxel and IMP321, showed an improvement of the delay of progression.

Immutep said subgroups, including those with a low monocyte count and the luminal B tumor type, would be investigated further and it would pursue regulatory interaction for the next steps for metastatic breast cancer.

Immutep fell a further 5.5 cents or 32.25 percent to 11.5 cents with 13.7 million shares traded, today, having fallen 13 cents or 43.3 percent to 17 cents with 14.5 million shares traded, yesterday, a total fall of 61.7 percent.

MURDOCH CHILDREN'S RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Murdoch Children's Research Institute says it will start a 4,000-subject trial of the tuberculosis vaccine to combat Covid-19 infections in front-line health care workers.

The MCRI said that although the bacilli Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine was developed to prevent tuberculosis, a severe bacterial infection, "previous studies have shown that the vaccine has the added benefit of boosting the immune system, allowing the body to fight other infections, and hopefully in this case reduce Covid-19 symptoms".

The Institute said that the multi-centre trial will be conducted with 4,000 health workers in hospitals around the country to determine if it is effective against Covid-19.

The MCRI said that the project's lead researcher Prof Nigel Curtis was a clinician-scientist in its Infectious Diseases Research Group.

MICRO-X

Micro-X says it has an additional \$600,000 in orders for its Carestream DRX Revolution Nano due to Covid-19 increasing demand for diagnostic X-ray imaging.

Earlier this month, Micro-X said it had a total of \$1.8 million in current quarter sales of the DRX Revolution Nano (BD: Mar 5, 2020).

Today, the company said it had scaled up capacity of Nano production to two units per day for up to four-week deliveries to meet order volume and time requirements.

Micro-X said that it would increase capacity to "meet the burst-order volumes and reduced delivery time requirements which characterize this new global purchasing trend".

Micro-X was up 1.5 cents or 12.5 percent to 13.5 cents with 2.9 million shares traded.

MEDADVISOR

Medadvisor says it has reduced the pilot phase and launched phase one of its medication delivery service for patients during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Medadvisor said its delivery service would support pharmacies to offer home delivery and allow patients to order, pay and request delivery from its smartphone application, including a pay-in-advance function, which 2,000 pharmacies had activated in the past two weeks.

The company said temporary measures were in place to provide no-contact delivery to avoid unnecessary contact and it would move to a national rollout in the next three weeks.

Medadvisor said its service would allow pharmacies to claim \$5 per delivery as part of the Federal Government's \$25 million in funding to deliver medications to those at risk.

The company said phase two would allow pharmacies to offer same-day delivery in metropolitan regions by using third-party delivery provider, Kings Transport.

Medadvisor was up 7.5 cents or 22.7 percent to 40.5 cents with 1.4 million shares traded.

TALI DIGITAL (FORMERLY NOVITA HEALTHCARE, AVEXA)

Tali says its Tali Detect early release program found that 13.86 percent of 1,086 children showed higher inattentive performance compared to their peers.

Tali said the Tali Detect program was deployed to children between five and seven years of age in the Victorian public education system to compare children with their average age and gender-matched peers.

The company said that the 13.86 percent might "require attention enhancement assistance" and an additional 5,000 students have and would soon undertake in-school assessments with the program.

Tali was up 0.3 cents or 17.65 percent to two cents with 47.6 million shares traded.

CARDIEX

Cardiex says has an amended agreement with Bayer AG, worth \$US251,000 (\$A423,025), to lease its devices and for expanded data management services. Cardiex said its original \$US756,000 Bayer contract through subsidiary Atcor Medical for clinical services and devices had been increased to \$US1,530,000. Cardiex was up 0.3 cents or 21.4 percent to 1.7 cents with 1.1 million shares traded.

ALLEGRA ORTHOPAEDICS

Allegra says revenue from its orthopaedic division “will be materially and negatively impacted” due to the cancellation of elective surgeries due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Allegra said it would support trauma and oncology procedures, considered urgent and essential surgeries, through its distribution of Waldemar Link GmbH & Co products. The company said it had reduced senior staff salaries, staff hours and had stood down some staff until the situation was under control. Allegra said it was unable to estimate the value of the impact of Covid-19 and it would depend on how long the Federal Government measures were in place. Allegra was up half a cent or 3.3 percent to 15.5 cents.

BTC HEALTH

BTC says that in light of uncertainty due to Covid-19 restrictions, it has withdrawn guidance provided in its half yearly results. BTC said that BTC Speciality Health, which provided medical devices and consumables to public and private hospitals in Australia and New Zealand, would potentially be damaged due to restrictions that suspended elective surgeries other than category one and urgent category two surgeries in Australia. The company said it currently held four months of inventory and was not aware of any anticipated disruptions in product supply. BTC said it didn't anticipate any material changes or disruptions to BIO101, which provided accounting, tax and company secretarial services to the life sciences sector, but would monitor developments on the possible impacts on all segments of its business. BTC was untraded at seven cents.

ACTINOGEN MEDICAL

Actinogen says patient enrolment of its phase I Xanamem disease target occupancy study has been put on hold until further notice due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Actinogen said most patients were already enrolled in the study which was measuring the affinity of Xanamem to bind to 11-beta-HSD-1 cortisol-activation enzyme in the brain. and it had adequate data for the detailed data analyses currently being undertaken. The company said its UK and France-based pre-clinical studies were also being impacted due to directives that employees work from home. Actinogen said it may need to delay new clinical studies, but planning for studies in Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia-associated cognitive impairment and diabetes were progressing. Actinogen was up 0.1 cents or 6.25 percent to 1.7 cents with 2.9 million shares traded.

EXOPHARM

Exopharm says its overall operations are affected by Covid-19 and its development programs would be reduced to focus on its core program.

Exopharm said the Plexoval I wound healing study timeframes were not being met, progress was “affected by a number of factors outside of our control” and it was unsure if the study would be completed or numbers would be reduced.

The company said planning for a first-in-human allogeneic off-the-shelf Plexaris safety study was progressing and two ocular animal studies were underway, expected to report in coming months.

Exopharm said other non-core non-clinical studies and spending were planned and scheduled but were postponed due to Covid-19.

Exopharm fell half a cent or 2.9 percent to 17 cents.

GENETIC SIGNATURES

Genetic Signatures has requested a trading halt pending “the release of an announcement updating the market on progress with Covid-19 diagnostic testing”.

Trading will resume on March 30, 2020 or on an earlier announcement.

Genetic Signatures last traded up 2.5 cents or 2.3 percent to \$1.10.

CRESO PHARMA

Creso says the first product order of its marijuana food additive Cannaqix has been delivered to the Capetown, South Africa-based Pharma Dynamics.

Creso said Pharma Dynamics would launch the product under the brand name Cannamics by July 2020.

Creso was up 0.6 cents or 11.1 percent to six cents with 2.1 million shares traded.

BENITEC BIOPHARMA

Benitec says its scheme meeting to leave Australia for the US has been approved, with 69,321,766 votes (86.92%) in favor and 10,429,281 votes (13.08%) opposed.

Last month, Benitec said the Supreme Court of Queensland had ordered a shareholder scheme meeting to vote on making Benitec Biopharma Inc or Holdco its parent company (BD: Feb 7, 2020).

Benitec was up half a cent or 22.7 percent to 2.7 cents.

AVECHO BIOTECHNOLOGY (FORMERLY PHOSPHAGENICS)

Avecho says it has deferred its May 14, 2020 annual general meeting until the end of July following advice from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

Avecho said that ASIC had cautioned against holding annual general meetings whilst current Covid-19 restrictions on large gatherings were in place.

The company said it would defer the closing date for receipt of director nominations.

Avecho was unchanged at 0.2 cents with 2.4 million shares traded.

NEUREN PHARMACEUTICALS

Auckland Trust is believed to have exited Neuren selling all 14,267,118 shares (14.24%) for \$1 each to the Hing Kong based Karst Peak.

According to Commsec Iress Viewpoint data, there was a single trade of 14,267,118 shares yesterday morning, almost matching the 14,267,119 shares held by Auckland Trust in Neuren's most recent annual report.

Today, Neuren said that funds managed by Karst Peak Capital had acquired about 14 percent of the company's shares.

A Neuren executive was unable to confirm the transaction.

Neuren said that Karst Peak was an investment management firm, focused on equity investments in healthcare and technology.

Neuren executive chairman Dr Richard Treagus said the company was "very pleased to welcome Karst Peak as a new shareholder with substantial life sciences expertise and international reach".

"This significantly enhances the international and institutional make-up of Neuren's share register as we approach a period of great opportunity for both trofinetide and NNZ-2591," Dr Treagus said.

Neuren was up five cents or five percent to \$1.05.

LIFESPOT HEALTH

Lifespot has requested a trading halt "pending a response to an ASX price query".

Trading will resume on March 30, 2020 or on an earlier announcement.

Lifespot last traded up 1.3 cents or 26.5 percent to 6.2 cents with 5.9 million shares traded.

LITTLE GREEN PHARMA

Little Green Pharma says commissioning of its expanded Western Australia-based cultivation facility has been completed on-time and on-budget.

Little Green said the expanded facility would have the capacity to produce enough cannabis flower to manufacture more than 110,000 bottles of medical marijuana oil each year.

Little Green was up two cents or 10 percent to 22 cents.

MGC PHARMACEUTICALS

MGC has requested a further extension to its voluntary suspension following the trading halt requested on March 19, 2020 for a Covid-19-related joint venture.

Last week, MGC requested a trading halt pending an announcement on "a material agreement regarding a strategic joint venture with a Swiss company in relation to Covid-19 (BD: Mar 19, 2020).

On Monday, the company requested a voluntary suspension, an extension to the suspension on Wednesday and yesterday, requested a further extension which it expected to last until today March 26 (BD: Mar 23, 24, 25, 2020).

Today, MGC said it expected the suspension to last until March 27, 2020.

MGC last traded at 1.7 cents.

[BRANDON CAPITAL, MEDICAL RESEARCH COMMERCIALISATION FUND](#)

The Medical Research Commercialisation Fund says it has appointed Bill Ferris chair, replacing Peter Beattie, who continues as a director.

The Brandon Capital-managed MRCF said that former Victoria Health Minister Robert Knowles would replace the Fund's inaugural chair Alan Stockdale as a director.

The Fund said that Mr Ferris was "the architect" of the Federal Government's \$500 million Biomedical Translation Fund and was previously the chair of the Garvan Medical Research Institute and inaugural chair of the Federal Innovation and Science Australia board.

The MRCF said that Brandon Capital established the first fund of \$30 million, 13 years ago, with a focus on commercializing early stage biomedical discoveries.

The fund said it had more than \$700 million under management and was "the largest life science investment fund across Australia and New Zealand".

[NOXOPHARM](#)

Noxopharm says it has appointed Boris Patkin as a non-executive director, replacing three-month director Dr Beata Edling/Niechoda who resigned last year.

In October Noxopharm said Dr Beata Edling had resigned "due to family reasons" and in July said it had appointed Dr Beata Niechoda a director (BD: Jul 16, Oct 16, 2019).

Today, Noxopharm said Mr Patkin had more than 30 years' experience in financial advice, business consulting and stockbroking, and held a Bachelor of Science.

Noxopharm was untraded at 11 cents.