



Biotech Daily

Tuesday July 13, 2021

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

- * **ASX FLAT, BIOTECH UP: LBT UP 16%; PHARMAXIS DOWN 6%**
- * **POLYNOVO INCREASES US SALES STAFF; EXPECTS RECORD REVENUE**
- * **UNIQUEST, CSL DEVELOP 'MOLECULE' FOR BLOOD VESSEL DAMAGE**
- * **WEHI: IMMUNE BOOST KILLS TB, IN MICE**
- * **ORTHOCELL: SAMSON STRIATE+ (CELGRO DENTAL) DISTRIBUTOR**
- * **MGC STARTS PHASE III CIMETRA (ARTEMIC) COVID-19 TRIAL**
- * **COPIA, IOOF TAKE 5% OF BTC HEALTH**
- * **BCCL REDUCES TO 8.45% OF TALI**
- * **LIFESPOT APPOINTS ELIZABETH SPOONER CO-CO SEC**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market slipped 0.02 percent on Tuesday July 13, 2021, with the ASX200 down 1.4 points to 7,332.1 points. Eighteen of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 11 fell, nine traded unchanged and two were untraded.

LBT was the best, up 1.6 cents or 16.2 percent to 11.5 cents, with 1.3 million shares traded. Actinogen climbed 8.7 percent; Antisense was up 7.5 percent; Oncosil and Proteomics improved five percent or more; Genetic Signatures rose 4.5 percent; Imugene, Nanosonics, Pro Medicus and Volpara were up three percent or more; Clinuvel, Medical Developments and Starpharma rose more than two percent; Avita, Immutep, Next Science and Polynovo were up one percent or more; with CSL, Neuren and Resmed up by less than one percent.

Pharmaxis led the falls, down 0.5 cents or 5.6 percent to 8.4 cents, with 276,935 shares traded. Alterity and Telix lost more than five percent; Compumedics fell 3.7 percent; Prescient shed 2.1 percent; Cynata, Mesoblast, Paradigm and Universal Biosensors were down one percent or more; with Cochlear, Opthea and Orthocell down by less than one percent.

POLYNOVO

Polynovo says it has increased its Novosorb biodegradable temporizing matrix (BTM) wound treatment US sales team to 36 staff, including six trained in the last month.

Polynovo said it had “record US turnover” for the three months to June 30, 2021 up 48.5 percent to \$US4.9 million (\$A6.54 million) compared to the previous corresponding period. The company said that the increased revenue and sales staff was despite “limited access to US hospitals and surgeons due to Covid”.

Polynovo said it had increased “revenue momentum in the US and all other major markets”.

The company said that for the year to June 30, 2021 it had Novosorb BTM revenue growth of about 34 percent, with distributor revenue up 53 percent “with strong increases in ... Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, further sales in South Africa and India, [and] good first sales in Finland, Italy and Taiwan”.

Polynovo was up three cents or 1.3 percent to \$2.41 with 6.3 million shares traded.

UNIQUEST, CSL

The University of Queensland says a protein molecule being developed with CSL might help patients recover faster from severe trauma, burns and major surgery.

The University’s commercialization arm Uniquet said it had partnered with CSL to accelerate the development of the potential treatment for the repair of blood vessels damaged by inflammation.

Uniquet said the molecule was refined by University of Queensland Faculty of Medicine researcher Prof Mark Coulthard with Prof Trent Woodruff and Dr Nemat Khan at the School of Biomedical Sciences.

The company said that \$500,000 from the CSL Research Acceleration Initiative would take the molecule to pre-clinical studies.

Dr Coulthard said the technology could benefit “critically ill patients with sepsis or acute respiratory distress syndrome, as well as improve patient recovery from heart attack, stroke, and organ transplant”.

“It may also prevent high-risk patients from developing systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS), which affects more than half of critically ill patients and contributes to significant mortality and morbidity,” Dr Coulthard said.

“Critically ill patients with SIRS are currently resuscitated in the intensive care unit with large amounts of intravenous fluids and infusions that help to stabilize low blood pressure caused by leaky blood vessels,” Dr Coulthard said.

“Finding a way to block the inflammatory mechanism that causes the leaky vessels is potentially a much more effective treatment,” Dr Coulthard said.

Uniquet said the technology was originally developed by Prof Andrew Boyd with Prof Perry Bartlett at the University’s Queensland Brain Institute.

Dr Coulthard said there was currently no therapy targeting the underlying cause of systemic inflammation, which damaged the cells lining the inside surface of blood vessels.

“Leaky blood vessels may also result in complications as a result of complex surgery, organ transplantation, major trauma and extensive burns,” Dr Coulthard said.

“Our approach has the potential to reduce deaths and ventilator bed days, shorten hospital stays and cut overall health costs,” Dr Coulthard said.

Uniquet chief executive officer Dr Dean Moss said the partnership with CSL was an opportunity to help the scientific team further develop its research.

CSL was up 46 cents or 0.2 percent to \$279.52 with 681,604 shares traded.

[THE WALTER AND ELIZA HALL INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH](#)

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute says that boosting the immune pathway could assist finding new treatments for tuberculosis.

The Institute said that researchers showed how cells infected with tuberculosis bacteria could die and that enhancing particular forms of apoptosis, or cell death, decreased the severity of the disease, in mice.

The research paper, titled 'Macrophage and neutrophil death programs differentially confer resistance to tuberculosis', was published in the journal *Immunity* with an abstract available at: [https://www.cell.com/immunity/fulltext/S1074-7613\(21\)00253-3](https://www.cell.com/immunity/fulltext/S1074-7613(21)00253-3).

The summary said that apoptosis could potentially defend against intracellular pathogens by directly killing microbes and eliminating their replicative niche.

"The reported ability of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* to restrict apoptotic pathways in macrophages in-vitro has led to apoptosis being dismissed as a host-protective process in tuberculosis despite a lack of in-vivo evidence," the abstract said.

"Here we define crucial in-vivo functions of the death receptor-mediated and BCL-2-regulated apoptosis pathways in mediating protection against tuberculosis by eliminating distinct populations of infected macrophages and neutrophils and priming T-cell responses," the study said. "We further show that apoptotic pathways can be targeted therapeutically with clinical-stage compounds that antagonize inhibitor of apoptosis (IAP) proteins to promote clearance of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in mice."

The abstract said the findings showed that any inhibition of apoptosis by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* was incomplete in-vivo "revealing host pathways that may be targetable for treatment of disease".

WEHI said that cells infected with tuberculosis bacteria had functional cell death pathways, and researchers were able to pinpoint the critical pathways as targets for new therapies, whereby infected cells could be killed by IAP inhibitors.

The Institute said that host-directed therapies were viable for infections such as tuberculosis, which is important in the era of extensive antibiotic resistance.

WEHI said that tuberculosis was caused by bacteria that infect the lungs, spreading from person to person through the air and was one of the top 10 causes of death.

The Institute said that tuberculosis bacteria grew in immune cells in the lungs and one way that cells protected against these 'intracellular' pathogens was to undergo apoptosis – destroying the cell, as well as the microbes within it.

WEHI said that using pre-clinical models, researchers sequentially deleted key apoptosis effectors, to demonstrate their roles in controlling tuberculosis infections, showing that a proportion of tuberculosis-infected cells could die by apoptosis, opening new opportunities for controlling the disease.

[ORTHOCELL](#)

Orthocell says it has appointed Sydney's Samson Medical Technologies its exclusive distributor of Striate+, or Celgro Dental, for bone and soft tissue repair in Australia.

Orthocell managing-director Paul Anderson said that Samson was "a leading distributor of innovative medical devices with an experienced team to assist in managing the market entry, promotion and distribution of Striate+".

The company said that Striate+ had been included on the Australian Prostheses List, enabling dental practitioners to receive reimbursement from private insurers for use in approved dental bone and soft tissue repair procedures (BD: Mar 3, 2021).

Orthocell said the exclusive distribution agreement was for five years.

Orthocell fell half a cent or 0.9 percent to 55 cents.

MGC PHARMACEUTICALS

MGC said the first of 252 adult patients has been recruited for its Israel and Brazil randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase III trial of Cimetra for Covid-19. MGC said the patient was recruited at the Haifa, Israel-based Rambam Medical Centre (BD: Mar 23, 2021).

The company said the trial was designed to test Cimetra on moderate hospitalized patients infected with Covid-19 for safety and efficacy, "with the purpose of treating the patho-physiological repercussions of infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (Sars-Cov-2).

MGC said the trial would have three arms, testing two different compositions of Cimetra, which was also called Artemic, including artemisinin, curcumin, boswellia and vitamin C in a spray administration, as an additional therapy, compared with placebo.

The company said the primary endpoint was the time to sustained clinical improvement, defined as a national early warning score of 2 maintained for 24 hours in comparison to routine treatment, measured on days 7, 14 and 28.

MGC said the study would last for four weeks, and any additional time required for follow-up until hospital discharge, to check side effects and study drug efficacy.

MGC was up 0.3 cents or 7.9 percent to 4.1 cents with 11.5 million shares traded.

BTC HEALTH

Melbourne's Copia Investment Partners says it has become a substantial shareholder in BTC Health with 14,435,715 shares or 5.12 percent.

Copia said it held the shares with IOOF (the Independent Order of Odd Fellows) Investment Management, acquiring 4,285,715 shares for \$300,000 or seven cents a share.

Earlier this month, BTC said it had firm commitments to raise \$2.5 million at seven cents a share to fund the acquisition of distribution rights of Pharmaxis' drugs Bronchitol and Aridol (BD: Jul 2, 2021).

According to the Copia website, its board includes Sidney Myer and Charles Baillieu, with Sam Baillieu its chief executive officer.

BTC was up 0.2 cents or 2.5 percent to 8.2 cents.

TALI DIGITAL

Bennett Coleman & Co Ltd (BCCL) Worldwide Inc says it has reduced its substantial shareholder in Tali from 81,800,594 (9.842%) to 78,801,343 shares (8.45%).

The Redwood City, California-based BCCL said it sold 2,999,251 shares for \$US109,412 (\$A146,072) or 4.87 cents a share, at a time when, according to Commsec data, Tali was trading between 3.4 cents and 4.1 cents.

In May, BCCL said that on January 6, 2021 it bought the shares for \$US2,000,000 (\$A2,568,706) or 3.3 Australian cents a share (BD: May 14, 2021).

Last year, Tali said it had investment and advertising agreements of up-to \$US7 million (\$A9.4 million) for its Detect and Train programs in India with Brand Capital International, the strategic investment arm of Bennett, Coleman and Co which was part of the Times Group, publishers of the Times of India (BD: Dec 8, 2020).

Tali was up 0.1 cents or 2.7 percent to 3.8 cents with 3.6 million shares traded.

LIFESPOT HEALTH

Lifespot says it has appointed Elizabeth Spooner as joint company secretary, joining Nova Taylor, effective immediately.

Lifespot said Ms Spooner was an experienced governance and compliance professional working with listed and unlisted public companies through Automic Group.

The company said that Ms Spooner held a Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Arts from Sydney's Macquarie University.

Lifespot was up one cent or 10.5 percent to 10.5 cents.