



Biotech Daily

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Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

Bouquets For Biota, Bionomics

I must admit I have never been a fan of any of the influenza drugs.

Although they were a good idea, they really just didn't provide the patient with enough benefit to justify them putting their hands in their pockets.

The eventual financial success of these drugs, I believe, was due to countries being a bit too proactive when the fear of a global pandemic influenza outbreak became a public fear rather than a medical/scientific fear.

Everything I read post bird flu and swine flu, suggested that drugs like Relenza and Gilead's Tamiflu were a bit like turning up at a gun-fight with a pen-knife.

In fact, those that count seemed to be thinking the same thing, with focus shifting to developing drugs for those who were life-threateningly sick from influenza.

Hence, I have been less than bullish about the prospects of Biota's long acting neuraminidase inhibitor, laninamivir (Inavir).

While it made sense for Daiichi Sankyo, Biota's partner, to develop it for Japan, where these types of drugs sell well, I couldn't see the sense in developing it for the rest of the world.

Potential partners, it seems, agreed with me.

But the Office of Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority in coming to the laninamivir party with up to \$US231 million over five years to take laninamivir to the US Food and Drug Administration is obviously a game changer for laninamivir and shifts the economics of developing the drug for the US well and truly into the "in favor" column.

Congratulations to Biota for sticking to the task. It seems likely that laninamivir's success will now be determined by patients, not straight economics.

While I am handing out bouquets, I need to congratulate Bionomics on its clinical trial results.

Bionomics' BNC210 which is being developed as an anti-anxiety medication, produced some very nice results in two phase Ib trials.

We do need to remember that these were Ib studies and that there is still a long way to go, but you can only jump one hurdle at a time.

With George Jessup's Start-up Australia failing to sell its 28 percent stake in Bionomics, the stock may experience a fairly big over-hang in the not-too-distant future.

Having said that, Start-up did a very nice job of keeping its intention to sell its stake in Bionomics from capping the share price in the lead up to the BNC210 results.

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