



Biotech Daily

Thursday April 7, 2022

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

- * **ASX, BIOTECH DOWN: USCOM UP 10%; IMPEDIMED DOWN 7%**
- * **VICTORIA: QS RANKS MONASH 'TOP PHARMACY, PHARMACOLOGY UNI'**
- * **RHINOMED \$22m CANADA SUPPLY DEAL; \$5m RIGHTS OFFER**
- * **MONASH UNI'S DR XIAODONG LIU WINS \$20k VICTORIA PREMIER'S AWARD**
- * **MTP CONNECT, PATHOLOGY TECHNOLOGY DIAGNOSTICS PLAN**
- * **MTP CONNECT, DEFENCE BIO-SECURITY DATABASE**
- * **OSTEOPORE SHIPS 1st CRANIAL IMPLANT TO COLOMBIA**
- * **EMYRIA STARTS PHASE I EMD-RX5 TRIAL**
- * **ALTERITY: MRI SHOWS IRON, ATROPHY CORRELATION**
- * **ADALTA: INDIA PATENT FOR AD-214**
- * **CANN GROUP WINS MILDURA MARIJUANA MANUFACTURE PERMIT**
- * **STATE STREET TAKES 6.1% OF COCHLEAR**
- * **MESOBLAST APPOINTS PAUL HUGHES CO-CO SEC**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market fell 0.63 percent on Thursday April 7, 2022, with the ASX200 down 47.3 points to 7,442.8 points. Ten of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 24 fell and six traded unchanged.

Uscom was the best, up one cent or 10 percent to 11 cents, with 4,592 shares traded. Nova Eye climbed 7.55 percent; Atomo, Micro-X, Paradigm, Resmed and Volpara rose more than two percent; Cynata and Pharmaxis were up more than one percent; with Neuren and Telix up by less than one percent.

Impedimed led the falls, down one cent or 7.1 percent to 13 cents, with 4.1 million shares traded. Prescient lost 6.45 percent; Compumedics and Immutep were down more than five percent; Imugene, Opthea and Patrys fell four percent or more; Actinogen, Amplia, Clinuvel, Genetic Signatures, Pro Medicus, Resonance and Universal Biosensors were down more than three percent; Avita shed 2.1 percent; Emvision, Mesoblast, Nanosonics, Next Science, Proteomics and Starpharma were down more than one percent; with Cochlear, CSL, Kazia, Medical Developments and Polynovo down less than one percent.

[MONASH UNIVERSITY, VICTORIA GOVERNMENT](#)

The Victoria Government says the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings has listed Monash as “the world’s top university” in pharmacy and pharmacology. A media release from Victoria Treasurer Tim Pallas said that “Victoria’s excellence in taking world-leading research and developing life-changing medicines has been confirmed in a landmark ranking that names Monash University as the global leader in the field”. The media release said that the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings was an annual publication of university rankings and this was “the first time that an Australian university has achieved this rank in life sciences, with Monash topping renowned institutions including the University of Oxford, Harvard University and the University of Cambridge”. The State Government said the confirmation of Monash University “as the leader in pharmaceutical sciences and drug discovery” followed the development of Australia’s first Covid-19 mRNA vaccine, the launch of Septerna, a biotech company dedicated to discovering and advancing novel small molecule medicines, and Monash researchers developing an inhaled oxytocin powder for postpartum haemorrhage. “When students from around the world are looking for the best place to study pharmacy and pharmacology, these rankings show that they’ll find it right here in Melbourne,” Mr Pallas said. “We’re proud to back our universities because they produce people and work that make a real difference.” According to Wikipedia the Quacquarelli Symonds ranking had “approval from the International Ranking Expert Group and is viewed as one of the three most-widely read university rankings in the world”. Wikipedia said the survey was previously known as Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings, but parted from the Times Higher Education to partner with the publisher Elsevier.

[RHINOMED](#)

Rhinomed says it has a \$21.6 million deal to supply Canada’s BTNX Inc with Rhinoswabs, and plans to raise \$5 million in a one-for-9.87 rights offer. Rhinomed said that the Markham, Ontario-based BTNX was one of Canada’s largest suppliers of rapid antigen tests, and while the value of the deal was confidential, it had the potential to be “465 percent to 475 percent of reviewed revenues [for the six months to December 31, 2021] of \$3.75 million.” Biotech Daily calculates that 475 percent above \$3.75 million is about \$21.6 million. The company said that the agreement to supply a minimum of 22.5 million Rhinoswabs and Rhinoswabs Junior to BTNX for use in its rapid antigen tests, would begin in July and have a term of 24 months. Rhinomed chief executive officer Michael Johnson said that the supply agreement with BTNX was “an indicator of the strong market feedback BTNX has received and the impending completion of the Canadian regulatory approval process”. “The BTNX Rapid Response with Rhinoswab Junior has the potential to transform the way children in Canada are tested,” Mr Johnson said. Separately, Rhinomed said it hoped to raise \$5 million through a non-renounceable, one-for-9.87 rights offer at 19 cents a share, or a 7.3 percent discount to its last closing price. The company said Bell Potter would be the lead manager and book runner for the institutional rights offer, which was underwritten to \$3.226 million. Rhinomed said it hoped to raise \$1.651 million in a retail rights offer, which had a record date of April 11, would open on April 13, and close April 29, 2022. Rhinomed was in a trading halt and last traded at 20.5 cents.

VICTORIA GOVERNMENT

The Victoria Government says Monash University's Dr Xiaodong Liu has won the \$20,000 Premier's Research Excellence Award for stem cell research.

The Victoria Government said that Dr Liu's research on improved stem cell therapies helped develop a human embryo model made from skin cells, called an Iblastoid, which was then used to study diseases affecting early development and infertility.

A media release from the State Government said that Dr Liu also won the Basic Science Researcher category.

The Aboriginal Researcher award went to the Australian Stroke Alliance's Dr Angela Dos Santos, the best Clinical Researcher was the University of Melbourne's Dr Rachel Nelligan, the Health Services Researcher award went to Monash University's Dr Rebecca Goldstein and the Public Health Researcher award was won by Monash University's Dr Roshan Selvaratnam and Deakin University's Dr Christina Zorbas.

The Victoria Government said that each research would receive \$5,000.

The Minister for Innovation and Medical Research Jaala Pulford said that early-career researchers were "the future of scientific discovery here in Victoria and we are immensely proud of their exceptional contributions".

MTP CONNECT

MTP Connect says it has undisclosed funding from the Australian Government to develop a national plan for sovereign manufacturing capability for diagnostic tests.

MTP Connect said the plan would be developed in partnership with the Sydney-registered Pathology Technology Australia, the peak body representing manufacturers and suppliers of medical tests and technology, over the next 12 months.

The company said the plan would examine supply chain and other barriers to reliably and sustainably produce in-vitro diagnostic devices.

MTP Connect said the tests would range from lateral flow rapid antigen and polymerase chain reaction tests to diagnostics for influenza, point-of-care tests for common infectious diseases and nucleic acid-based tests for detection of contagions, early cancer and drug resistant infections.

MTP Connect interim chief executive officer Stuart Dignam, said the Covid-19 pandemic "highlighted the importance of ready access to high-quality diagnostic tests and there's no doubt Australia has the scientific and technical capability to develop and manufacture innovative tests at the frontier of the world's health needs".

"Working with [Pathology Technology Australia], we'll carefully examine the barriers faced by innovative manufacturers in Australia when gaining access to the local market so we can work to boost the resilience of our supply chains for this technology," Mr Dignam said. "There are clear security, health and economic imperatives to establish, retain and strengthen supply resilience and sovereign manufacturing capabilities for key pathology technologies and that's what we're aiming to achieve with this Action Plan," Mr Dignam said.

Pathology Technology Australia chief executive officer Dean Whiting said that 100 percent of cancer diagnoses and more than 70 percent of all medical diagnoses and management decisions relied on pathology test results, so "the case for strengthening our domestic in-vitro diagnostics manufacturing capabilities is compelling".

MTP Connect said the Action Plan was part of the federal Government's "commitment to developing supply chain resilience and sovereign manufacturing capability on critical medical supplies".

MTP CONNECT

MTP Connect says it will fund a Defence Materials and Technology Centre project for an artificial intelligence-assisted bio-security capability database.

The Federal-funded MTP Connect did not disclose how much it would fund the project which would centre on increasing the ongoing monitoring capabilities of the National Health Security Resilience Assessment, beginning with anti-microbial resistance.

Defence Materials and Technology Centre head of health security for Dr Leigh Farrell said “previous surveys on Australia’s health security sector capability and supply chains have been incredibly useful in identifying capability and gaps, however, they have only provided point-in-time snapshots of the health security sector maturity”.

“By using resources and expertise of both organizations and our delivery partners, we’ll now be able to move beyond surveys,” Dr Farrell said.

“We will be able to develop a dynamic and truly digital database that is actively curated,” Dr Farrell said.

MTP Connect interim chief executive officer Stuart Dignam said “It’s all about knowing what’s out there so we can more accurately build preparedness and response plans for future threats”.

OSTEOPORE

Osteopore says it has shipped its first cranial implants to its Colombia distributor Implar SAS, the first sales in Latin America.

Osteopore said Implar would promote the technology to its network of hospitals and surgeons across the region.

The company said that its cranio-facial implants were off-the-shelf products that could be manufactured at scale, with a potential market of more than 1.1m craniofacial procedures. Osteopore said the implants dissolved over time to leave natural healthy bone, and had “largely outperformed traditional implant methods in terms of design, post-surgery complications and associated long-term health care costs”.

The company said its cranial implants had been cleared for marketing and sales by Colombia's regulatory agency, the Instituto Nacional de Vigilancia de Medicamentos y Alimentos.

Osteopore executive chair Mark Leong said the first sales in Latin America were “a fantastic milestone for the company, as surgeons around the world increasingly realize the benefits of Osteopore products”.

Osteopore was up 2.5 cents or 13.5 percent to 21 cents.

EMYRIA

Emyria says it has dosed the first of 12 volunteers in its phase I trial comparing 150mg EMD-RX5 cannabidiol (CBD) capsules with 100mg/ml Epidyolex CBD.

In March, Emyria said it had begun recruiting 12 volunteers for the trial comparing the safety and bioavailability of its EMD-RX5 to Epidyolex (BD: Mar 9, 2022).

Today, Emyria managing-director Dr Michael Winlo said that “planning for the upcoming pivotal phase III clinical trials for EMD-RX5 has been completed, and is expected to commence immediately after the completion of this phase I study”.

“Additional phase I trials are also planned for our other ultra-pure cannabinoid medicines including EMD-RX7, which is targeting indications requiring higher CBD exposures,” Dr Winlow said.

Emyria fell half a cent or 1.6 percent to 30.5 cents.

ALTERITY

Alterity says data from its Biomuse study has identified a correlation between iron accumulation in the brain and progression of multiple system atrophy.

Alterity said its Biomuse trial was a natural history study tracking disease progression in individuals with early multiple system atrophy, a Parkinsonian disorder without approved therapy.

The company said the study used quantitative magnetic resonance imaging methods that showed that pathological iron accumulation in multiple system atrophy patients was related to clinical severity.

Alterity said the data supported the use of the quantitative magnetic resonance imaging techniques as a biomarker of disease severity for multiple system atrophy.

Alterity consultant and principal investigator Prof Daniel Claassen said “through brain imaging, we have been able to measure and track iron accumulation in various brain regions of Parkinson’s disease and [multiple system atrophy] patients that contributes to disease progression”.

“The study reinforces our belief that early diagnosis of [multiple system atrophy] is vital for maximizing neuronal preservation with disease modifying therapies,” Prof Claassen said.

Alterity chief executive officer Dr David Stamler said the ongoing Biomuse trial “continues to validate our approach of reducing iron accumulation to inhibit alpha-synuclein aggregation, rescue neurons and improve function in [multiple system atrophy] patients.”

“We expect to launch our global phase II clinical trial of ATH434 in early-stage [multiple system atrophy] in the second quarter of 2022,” Dr Stamler said.

Alterity said that Prof Claassen would present the data in a poster, titled ‘Iron Accumulation Correlates with Disease Severity in Patients with Multiple System Atrophy’ at the American Academy of Neurology meeting in Seattle, Washington, with an abstract at: <https://www.aan.com/MSA/Public/Events/Details/14704>.

Alterity was up 0.1 cents or 5.3 percent to two cents with one million shares traded.

ADALTA

Adalta says the India Patent Office has granted a patent for the I-body sequence used in lead product AD-214 for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

Adalta said the patent, titled ‘CXCR4 binding molecules’, would protect its I-body sequences until January 8, 2036.

Adalta was up 0.2 cents or 2.7 percent to 7.5 cents.

CANN GROUP

Cann Group says the Australian Office of Drug Control has granted Mildura facility a permit to allow the manufacture of medical marijuana products.

In March, Cann Group said the Office of Drug Control had granted it a permit allowing the cultivation and production of medical marijuana, but had yet to grant a permit allowing the manufacture of medical marijuana products at the facility (BD: Mar 15, 2022).

Today, the company said the manufacturing permit completed the suite of Office of Drug Control permits required.

Cann Group said it was working with the Therapeutic Goods Administration to attain a good manufacturing practice licence, which it expected “in coming months”.

Cann Group chief executive officer Peter Crock said “the granting of this permit by the ODC is one of the last pieces of the puzzle for our Mildura facility”.

Cann Group was up one cent or 3.5 percent to 29.5 cents with 3.3 million shares traded.

COCHLEAR

State Street says it has increased its substantial holding in Cochlear from 3,289,926 shares (5.00%) to 3,998,329 shares (6.08%).

The Boston, Massachusetts-based State Street said that in more than 1,400 transactions, it bought, sold, borrowed and transferred shares at prices ranging from \$182.06 to \$252.76 per share.

Cochlear fell 36 cents or 0.16 percent to \$224.79 with 71,188 shares traded.

MESOBLAST

Mesoblast says it has appointed investor relations officer Paul Hughes joint company secretary, to work with current company secretary Niva Sivakumar.

Mesoblast said Mr Hughes had previously worked in investment banking and corporate advisory, and had been its head of investor relations since 2020.

Mesoblast fell 1.5 cents or 1.3 percent to \$1.13 with 1.3 million shares traded.