



# Biotech Daily

Wednesday February 7, 2024

*Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies*

- \* **ASX, BIOTECH UP: PERCHERON UP 10.5%; MICRO-X DOWN 8%**
- \* **MONASH UNI POTENTIAL LUPUS TREATMENT, IN MICE**
- \* **CARDIEX RIGHTS RAISE \$4m; TOTAL \$8m**
- \* **TRUSCREEN WINS MEXICO PUBLIC CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING OK**
- \* **NEUROTECH NTI164 MARIJUANA AUTISM PATIENTS REACH 90-WEEKS**
- \* **PLATINUM TAKES 19% OF SYNTARA**
- \* **PARADIGM RECEIVES \$7.4m FEDERAL R&D TAX INCENTIVE**
- \* **RHYTHM REQUESTS 'CAPITAL RAISING' TRADING HALT**

## MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market was up 0.45 percent on Wednesday February 7, 2024, with the ASX200 up 34.2 points to 7,615.8 points.

Twenty-one of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 14 fell and five traded unchanged.

Percheron (Antisense) was the best for the second day in a row, up 0.7 cents or 10.45 percent to 7.4 cents, with 885,697 shares traded; followed by Clarity up 10.42 percent to \$2.65 with 874,019 shares traded and 4D Medical up 10.2 percent to 65 cents with 1.3 million shares traded.

Impedimed, Imugene and Paradigm improved more than nine percent; Actinogen, Compumedics and Genetic Signatures climbed more than six percent; Prescient was up 5.8 percent; Immutep was up 4.3 percent; Atomo, Cyclopharm, Nanosonics and Starpharma were up more than three percent; Clinuvel, Polynovo and Universal Biosensors rose more than two percent; Avita, Cochlear, CSL and Next Science were up one percent or more; with Neuren up by 0.6 percent.

Micro-X led the falls, down one cent or 7.7 percent to 12 cents, with 386,917 shares traded. Dimerix lost 6.4 percent; Curvebeam fell 4.3 percent; Cynata was down 3.3 percent; Orthocell and Resonance shed two percent or more; Medical Developments, Nova Eye, Opthea and Proteomics were down one percent or more; with Emvision, Pro Medicus, Resmed, SDI and Telix down by less than one percent.

## MONASH UNIVERSITY

Monash University says researchers have discovered a way to reprogram ineffective regulatory T-cells to develop an effective long-term lupus treatment, in mice.

Monash University said its researchers had previously discovered that a lack of specific regulatory T-cells, or T-regs, that protect the body from possible autoimmune disease and stop the immune system from targeting the body, could lead to treatments for autoimmune diseases such as lupus.

The University said researchers had developed a therapeutic effect by “identifying specific protective molecules from healthy people and reprogramming ineffective lupus patient T-regs to restore their ability to switch off unwanted immune responses”.

Monash University said the treatment involved taking blood cells from the lupus patient, modifying them in the lab to restore their protective effect and then giving them back.

The University said the treatment was developed in pre-clinical models and used cells derived from human patients “to restore the protective side of the immune system that prevents autoimmunity”.

Monash University said the research, titled ‘Smith-specific regulatory T-cells halt the progression of lupus nephritis’ was published in Nature Communications, with the full article available at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-024-45056-x>.

The University said researchers hoped the method could “also be developed for other autoimmune diseases such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and multiple sclerosis”.

Monash University said study patients were managed at Monash Health by director of rheumatology and co-author Prof Eric Morand, who said the research team was designing clinical trials expected to start in 2026 to investigate whether the method was a long-term cure for lupus.

The University said about one-in-1000 Australians had lupus, that rates were higher in Indigenous communities, with nine-in-10 people with lupus female and most developed it between the ages of 15 and 45 years.

Study co-author Prof Joshua Ooi said the research “showed the effectiveness of this approach using human lupus patient cells, both in the test tube and in an experimental model of lupus kidney inflammation”.

“We were able to completely arrest the development of lupus kidney disease, without the use of the usual non-specific and harmful immunosuppressant drugs,” Prof Ooi said.

“It’s like a reset of the abnormal immune system back to a healthy state,” Prof Ooi said.

“The ability to target, specifically, the disease-causing immune defect, without the need to suppress the entire immune system, is a game-changer,” Prof Ooi said.

“Even if the effects are only medium-term, we are confident the treatment can be easily repeated as needed,” Prof Ooi said.

“This project relied on the generous involvement of patients, which enabled us to use human lupus cells every step of the way,” Prof Ooi said.

Co-authors Peter Eggenhuizen and Dr Rachel Cheong said the new method could be developed for up to 100 other auto-immune diseases including diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, Sjögren's syndrome, scleroderma and myasthenia gravis.

“The great thing is that because the treatment is very specific, it doesn’t harm the rest of the immune system,” Dr Cheong said.

“However, this means that the treatment needs to be carefully developed disease-by-disease, as each one is distinct,” Dr Cheong said.

Monash University said the research was supported by multiple agencies, including New York’s Lupus Research Alliance.

The University said the research was part of a body of work that won Prof Morand and Prof Ooi the 2022 Victoria Prize for Science and Innovation in Life Sciences.

## CARDIEX

Cardiex says its one-for-2.87 entitlement offer at eight cents a share raised \$4 million, taking the total raised with the placement to \$8 million.

Last year, Cardiex said it had “firm commitments” to raise \$4.0 million in a placement and hoped to raise \$4.0 million more in an entitlement offer (BD: Dec 19, 2023).

Today, the company said \$1 million of the offer was underwritten by C2 Ventures, which was jointly owned by Cardiex chair Niall Cairns and chief executive officer Craig Cooper.

Last month, Cardiex said that following an \$8 million capital raise, the ASX would progress discussions on lifting its voluntary suspension (BD: Oct 4, 2023, Jan 21, 2024).

Cardiex last traded at 13.5 cents.

## TRUSCREEN GROUP

Truscreen says the Mexico regulatory body Cofepris has approved its cervical cancer screening device to be used in the public healthcare sector.

Truscreen said the approval allowed it to expand its non-invasive cervical cancer screening measuring optical and electrical stimuli from private health clinics to the wider public health sector.

The company said the decision was “a major milestone and endorsement of [its] ... technology”.

Truscreen said that 9,400 women were diagnosed with cervical cancer a year in Mexico.

Truscreen chief executive officer Dr Beata Edling said the approval “highlights the accelerating acceptance of the Truscreen technology globally”.

“I am delighted that women in Mexico will have access to faster, more efficient, and reliable cervical cancer screening with Truscreen,” Dr Edling said.

“We congratulate our partner, Sunbird on achieving this significant milestone and look forward to advancing cervical cancer screening in Mexico,” Dr Edling said.

Truscreen was up 0.3 cents or 13.6 percent to 2.5 cents.

## NEUROTECH INTERNATIONAL

Neurotech says 11 paediatric autism spectrum disorder patients from its phase I/II trial have been treated with daily oral doses of its marijuana-based NTI164 for 90 weeks.

Last year, Neurotech said it had ethics committee approval for 11 patients in its trial of NTI164 marijuana for autism spectrum disorder to continue treatment under compassionate use under the special access scheme category B (BD: May 31, 2023).

At that time, the company said the extension allowed patients to continue taking NTI164 beyond the 18-month trial period from July, and it would continue to collect periodic safety information from the compassionate use patients.

Today, Neurotech said NTI164 had “an exceptional safety and tolerability profile, with all patients showing stable blood chemistries and normal liver and kidney function over 90 weeks”.

Neurotech executive director Dr Thomas Duthy said the trial showed “the excellent durability of NTI164, and importantly no significant safety concerns have arisen beyond the original 52-week analysis”.

“This updated safety analysis underscores the potential for NTI164 as a long term, chronically administered therapeutic agent in the treatment of [autism spectrum disorder] without the safety and side effects observed in approved therapies that restrict certain behaviors, particularly aggression and irritability in paediatric patients,” Dr Duthy said.

Neurotech was unchanged at 10 cents with 3.6 million shares traded.

### PARADIGM BIOPHARMACEUTICALS

Paradigm says it has received \$7,363,876 from the Australian Taxation Office under the Federal Government's Research and Development Tax Incentive program.

Paradigm said the rebate related to research and development expenditure for the year to June 30, 2023.

The company said it expected the funds "to provide sufficient runway to the end of 2024".

Paradigm was up three cents or 9.4 percent to 35 cents.

### SYNTARA (FORMERLY PHARMAXIS)

Platinum Asset Management says it has increased its substantial holding in Syntara from 54,866,384 shares (7.63%) to 229,216,122 shares (19.24%).

The Sydney-based Platinum said that between December 7, 2022 and February 6, 2024, it bought shares, with the single largest acquisition on February 6, 2024 of 142,067,981 shares for \$3,125,496, or 2.2 cents a share.

Last week, Syntara said it had raised \$303,000 of a hoped-for \$2 million in a share purchase plan at 2.2 cents a share, taking the total raised with the December placement to \$10.3 million (BD: Dec 19, 2023; Feb 2, 2024).

Syntara was unchanged at 2.1 cents.

### RHYTHM BIOSCIENCES

Rhythm says it has requested a trading halt "pending an announcement to the market regarding a proposed capital raising".

Trading will resume on February 9, 2024, or on an earlier announcement.

Rhythm last traded at 17.5 cents.