Biotech Daily

Thursday June 22, 2023

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

*** ASX, BIOTECH DOWN: PATRYS UP 9%; COMPUMEDICS DOWN 8%**

*** TELIX BUYS LIGHTPOINT MEDICAL FOR UP TO $52m, MOSTLY SCRIP**

*** VICTORIA $2.7m FOR 16 mRNA PROJECTS**

*** VICTORIA, CSL, WEHI, MELBOURNE UNI $70m CICADA-JUMAR INCUBATOR**

*** MONASH UNIVERSITY STARTS GLYPH LYT-300 ANXIETY TRIAL**

*** MEDADVISOR EXPECTS UP-TO $97m REVENUE; REVIEW; JOB CUTS**

*** ECHO IQ: 1st AUSTRALIAN SALE OF ECHOSOLV FOR $70k**

*** ARGENICA ARG007 'REDUCES BRAIN DAMAGE, IN RATS'**

*** AVECHO: 'TPM-CBD GEL-CAPS 99.5% STABLE AT 2 YEARS'**

*** IMMURON TO MAKE IMM-529 FOR FDA PRE-IND SUBMISSION**

*** EBR REQUESTS 'CAPITAL RAISING' TRADING HALT**

*** CHUNYAN NIU TAKES 5% OF LIVING CELL**

*** MARK DAVIES REPLACES EXOPHARM CHAIR JASON WATSON**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market fell 1.63 percent on Thursday June 22, 2023, with the ASX200 down 119.4 points to 7,195.5 points. Eleven of the Biotech Daily Top 40 stocks were up, 23 fell, five traded unchanged and one was untraded.

Patrys was the best, up 0.1 cents or 9.1 percent to 1.2 cents, with 1.8 million shares traded. Cynata climbed eight percent; Pharmaxis rose 6.5 percent; Genetic Signatures was up 5.05 percent; Impedimed improved 3.1 percent; with Amplia, Dimerix, Prescient, Proteomics, Starpharma and Telix up by more than one percent.

Compumedics led the falls, down 1.5 cents or 8.3 percent to 16.5 cents, with 3,005 shares traded. 4D Medical and Polynovo lost more than six percent; Imugene was down 5.2 percent; Emvision and Micro-X fell more than four percent; Clinuvel, Immutep, Mesoblast, Neuren and Pro Medicus were down more than three percent; Actinogen, Cyclopharm, Nanosonics, Universal Biosensors and Volpara shed more than two percent; Alcidion, Avita, Cochlear, Next Science, Nova Eye, Orthocell and Paradigm were down more than one percent; with CSL, Opthea and Resmed down by less than one percent.

TELIX PHARMACEUTICALS

Telix says it will buy Lightpoint Medical and its Sensei radio-guided surgery business for up to $US45 million ($A51.6 million) in a combination of scrip or cash.

In 2021, Telix said it had an agreement with the Chesham, England-based Lightpoint to combine its TLX599-CDx with Lightpoint's Sensei, the world's first approved robotic gamma probe for radiation-guided surgery (BD: Aug 23, 2021).

Today, the company said it would pay $US20 million ($A29.5 million) in scrip and a further $US15 million ($A22.1 million) earn-out in cash or equity, at Telix's election, pending development and commercialization milestones.

Telix said Lightpoint's device enabled the intra-operative detection of cancer in real time, supporting greater precision in the removal of tumors.

The company said it intended to use Sensei with its Illuccix and TLX599-CDx programs for prostate cancer with scope to expand to other urologic and non-urologic malignancies, with Lightpoint also having artificial intelligence capabilities.

Telix said the Sensai had US Food and Drug Administration market approval and Conformité Européenne (CE) mark.

Telix chief medical officer Dr Colin Hayward said that prostate-specific membrane antigen (PSMA)-targeted imaging was "transforming the detection of prostate cancer". "With radio-guided surgery we can harness the targeting power of PSMA to precisely guide surgery and create a holistic 'PSMA toolkit' to detect, manage and treat this disease," Dr Hayward said.

"This is in line with our vision to continue to innovate and partner with physicians at every step of the patient journey," Dr Hayward said.

"Small, flexible gamma probes that can be used in the operative field while conducting robotic or laparoscopic surgery is a powerful innovation," Dr Hayward said.

Telix managing-director Dr Christian Behrenbruch said the transaction "brings a compelling commercial-stage asset to Telix that has the potential to transform the use of radio-pharmaceuticals in the interventional setting, with commensurate impact on Telix's market share for Illuccix".

"This acquisition also brings a highly-talented team to drive development of this asset and will leverage the commercial infrastructure we have built for Illuccix to further deepen our relationship with our customers," Dr Behrenbruch said.

The company said completion was subject to regulatory approvals which it expected to achieve within three months.

Telix was up 22 cents or 1.8 percent $12.50 with 1.5 million shares traded.

VICTORIA GOVERNMENT

The Victoria Government says it will provide $2.7 million for 16 projects researching mRNA treatments for a range of diseases.

A media release from Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews said it had awarded the Melbourne's Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre $1 million to develop mRNA treatments for hard-to-treat cancers including prostate, bowel and breast cancer.

The Government said this funding came from the mRNA Victoria Research Acceleration Fund, which provided one-off grants of up-to $500,000 to support research infectious diseases such as Covid-19 and non-communicable diseases including cancer, metabolic diseases, degenerative diseases and auto-immune diseases.

"Victoria is already a world leader in medical research and mRNA technology – researchers are now one step closer to leading mRNA therapies for treatments for cancer that will change the lives of cancer patients and their families," Mr Andrews said.

CICADA INNOVATIONS, VICTORIA GOVERNMENT, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE CSL, THE WALTER ELIZA HALL INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Cicada says that the Victoria Government, CSL, the Walter Eliza Hall Institute and the University of Melbourne will provide $70 million for the Jumar Bio-incubator.

Cicada said it would operate the Jumar bio-incubator which had an initial $25 million from Breakthrough Victoria and would receive a further $45 million from CSL, WEHI and the University of Melbourne.

The company said Jumar would provide early-stage and scaling biotechnology ventures access to facilities, infrastructure and support, to help progress discoveries into treatments and commercialize medical research.

Cicada said the incubator would support research translation, the moving of medical discoveries through the research pipeline to become new products, for businesses in areas like pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, medical devices, digital health, bioinformatics and health-oriented artificial intelligence.

The company said that the name jumar referred to “a mountaineering technique by which climbers receive the support necessary to efficiently scale and speedily ascend challenging mountains”.

Cicada said that Jumar would have self-contained laboratories, wet-labs, office spaces, and that it could provide preferential access to WEHI and University of Melbourne technology, as well as training, education and introductions to university staff.

Cicada company said the incubator, housed on two floors of CSL’s new headquarters, cost $30 million to build, with Camille Shanahan appointed general-manager.

Biotech startups can submit expressions of interest at: www.jumarbio.com

MONASH UNIVERSITY

Monash University says it has begun its 50-volunteer, phase IIa, placebo-controlled, proof-of-concept trial of LYT-300 for social anxiety with results expected by the end of the year.

In February, Monash University said that with Boston’s Puretech Health, it developed the Glyph technology to enable the oral administration of drugs with low oral bioavailability and LYT-300 was the oral form of allopregnanolone, marketed as Zulresso for post-partum depression,” (BD: Feb 15, 2023).

Today, the University said it would also begin a phase IIa, open-label, proof-of-concept study in women with post-partum depression by the end of 2023.

MEDADVISOR

Medadvisor says it has completed a strategic review with revenue for the year to June 30, 2023 expected to be up 40 to 43 percent to between $95 million and $97 million.

Medadvisor said it conducted the review following its acquisition of Sydney’s Guildlink last year (BD: Jul 25, 2022).

Last year, Medadvisor said that it had revenue for the year to June 30, 2022 of $67,750,061 with net loss after tax of $17,346,000 (BD: Aug 26, 2023).

Today, the company said it expected its loss before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) for the year to June 30, 2023 to be between $3.0 million and $3.5 million, down from an $11.3 million loss in the previous year.

Medadvisor said it planned to “reduce its Australian headcount” by about 20 percent by June 2023 to save about $2 million for the following 12 months.

Medadvisor was up two cents or 8.7 percent 25 cents with 1.1 million shares traded.

ECHO IQ

Echo IQ says it has sold Healthscope's Gold Coast Private Hospital a licence for its Echosolv technology, for about $70,000 a year, the first Australian sale of the technology.
Echo IQ said the Gold Coast Private Hospital would use its Echosolv artificial intelligence heart test for aortic stenosis to analyze patient echocardiograms.
In April, the company said a retrospective 9,189 sample trial had shown Echosolve identified 72 percent more patients with severe aortic stenosis than human diagnosis alone (BD: Apr 21, 2023).
Today, Echo IQ executive chair Andrew Grover said the purchase was an "outstanding development for Echo IQ and excellent validation of Echosolv by a leading and respected private Australian hospital with a large cardiovascular footprint".
Echo IQ was unchanged at 16 cents.

ARGENICA THERAPEUTICS

Argenica says ARG-007 has "significantly [reduced] damage to brain cells" in rats with moderate traumatic brain injury (TBI).
Argenica said a study mimicked an injury, such as a "king-hit" or motor vehicle accident, and following treatment showed protein levels equivalent to non-injured animals, with inflammation marker Iba1 "significantly reduced back to non-injured levels".
Argenica chief executive officer Liz Dallimore said the company was "extremely pleased with the results from our first preclinical study in a moderate TBI animal model".
"The study indicates that injury caused by moderate traumatic brain injury may be limited by the introduction of ARG-007 shortly thereafter, so we are extremely encouraged by this data," Dr Dallimore said.
"We now look forward to undertaking further studies, supported by funds provided by our CRC-P grant, to provide greater evidence of ARG-007's efficacy in TBI before establishing a clinical program of work," Dr Dallimore said.
The company said it would work with its co-operative research centre (CRC) partners on further pre-clinical studies assessing the efficacy of ARG-007 for moderate traumatic brain injury in ferrets and repeated dosing in rats.
Argenica was up 2.5 cents or 6.9 percent 38.5 cents.

AVECHO BIOTECHNOLOGY

Avecho says the cannabidiol (CBD) in its tocopheryl phosphate mixture (TPM)-CBD soft gel capsules is 99.5 percent stable two years after manufacture.
Avecho said that two-year shelf life was an "essential requirement" for Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration and US Food and Drug Administration registration.
Avecho chief executive officer Dr Paul Gavin said that cannabinoids were "not as stable as everyone assumes, especially when they are held to pharmaceutical standards".
"We saw CBD degradation in early prototypes that required further formulation optimization to overcome," Dr Gavin said. "Passing two year-stability is an important milestone, as it proves the additional formulation work we conducted was successful over the longer time-frame."
Dr Gavin said that Avecho was manufacturing product for use in its 540-patient, phase III, insomnia study of its cannabidiol soft-gel capsules at 75mg and 150mg compared to placebo, as well as formal registration batches that would be included in future TGA and FDA submissions.
Avecho was unchanged at half a cent.

IMMURON

Immuron says it will manufacture IMM-529 to proceed with a US Food and Drug Administration pre-investigational new drug submission for Clostridioides difficile.
Immuron said Clostridioides difficile was an anaerobic, spore-forming bacillus associated with gastro-intestinal disease, with infection able to cause life-threatening diarrhoea.
The company said that in addition to the manufacture of IMM-529 it had scheduled 96 telehealth screening interviews, with 81 potential candidates selected for in-person screening visits starting June 28, 2023, for its planned Travelan phase II trial.
Immuron fell 0.1 cents or 1.4 percent 7.1 cents.

EBR SYSTEMS

EBR Systems has requested a trading halt, pending an announcement regarding “a proposed capital raising”.
Trading will resume on June 26, 2023 or on an earlier announcement.
EBR Systems last traded at 98 cents.

LIVING CELL

The Sydney-based Chunyan Niu says she has become a substantial shareholder in Living Cell, with 78,430,790 shares or 5.03 percent of the company.
Ms Niu said she acquired the 78,430,790 shares through “various and on market buys” between November 30, 2021 and June 20, 2023 for $898,989 or an average of 1.15 cents a share.
Living Cell was unchanged at 1.4 cents with 11.1 million shares traded.

EXOPHARM

Exopharm says it has appointed Mark Davies as chair and non-executive director, following Jason Watson’s resignation, effective from June 22, 2023.
Exopharm said Mr Davies was the founder and chief executive officer of 1861 Capital and had been an Exopharm investor since 2018.
The company said Mr Davies was the chair of Neurotech International and held a Bachelor of Commerce from the University to Western Australia and.
Exopharm chief executive officer Dr Ian Dixon said that Mr Watson had “looked after the interests of all stakeholders over the past five years and always met the challenges with a professional and inclusive approach”.
“I thank Jason for his efforts and commitment,” Dr Dixon said.
Exopharm was unchanged at 0.9 cents.