Profile

immatics biotechnologies GmbH
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Paul Higham is the CEO of immatics biotechnologies GmbH,

How and when did your company start, and where are you located?
immatics has its roots at the University of Tuebingen’s Department of Immunology: The company was founded by Dr Harpreet Singh and colleagues in 2000 as a spin-off from the Institute of Immunology at the University of Tuebingen (Prof. Hans-Georg Rammensee) and has so far raised a total of €108 million (approx. $140 million) from renowned private equity investors.

immatics’ lab/office facilities and HQ are located in Tuebingen, Germany, with an additional office in Martinsried/Planegg (Muenchen), Germany.

How many employees do you have, and how do you find/attract them?
Today, immatics has a headcount of 68 skilled and experienced employees (FTEs) who are focused on drug discovery, pre-clinical research and late-stage clinical development.

immatics finds/attracts its employees via announcements in magazines (print and online), announcements on its website as well as via personal network contacts.

What are the main focus and platform technology(ies) of your company?
immatics focuses on developing advanced therapeutic vaccines that are active against cancers with a high unmet medical need; therefore scientists at immatics carefully investigate the role of tumor-associated peptides (TUMAPs) and their interaction with the body’s own natural defense, the immune system.

XPRESIDENT™ is immatics’ unique and proprietary technology platform, which allows to identify large numbers of TUMAPs directly from primary tumor tissue, down to a femtomolar level—a so far unrivalled sensitivity level. The technology is able to identify several thousand TUMAPs per year and selects the most immunogenic antigens through a proprietary T-cell validation platform. XPRESIDENT™ is scalable and can be applied to many different oncology indications, and its service combines mass spectrometry, genomics, biochemistry and immunology. XPRESIDENT™ is protected by world-wide issued patents.

Can you provide a short overview of your product pipeline?
immatics’ lead product, IMA901, a combination of multiple tumor-associated peptides (TUMAPs) for the treatment of renal cell carcinoma, commenced a world-wide phase 3 trial in 2011 and completed patient recruitment in 2012.”

The second product for the treatment of colorectal carcinoma, IMA910, completed a large phase 1/2 clinical trial in 2011.

A third product, IMA950, has entered two phase 1 studies in brain cancer in 2010 in collaboration with Cancer Research UK and in 2011 in collaboration with the US National Cancer Institute.

In addition, there are preclinical programs completed or underway for other tumor types.

Who is your competition, and what advantage(s) does your products/technology offer?
The three advantages of immatics’ approach in comparison to currently available anti-cancer therapies are: (1) its high specificity for the cancer concerned, (2) its overall very good side effect profile (usually restricted to mild skin reactions at the injection site) and (3) it does not require any patient material (cancer or immune cells) to be taken from the patient and can therefore be delivered conveniently and cost-effectively. As a result, immatics’ therapeutic cancer vaccines directly address the high unmet medical need in many cancer indications for specific, effective and well tolerated treatments. immatics’ cancer vaccines also have the advantage that they are “drug like” with stable, off-the-shelf formulations and robust, easily scalable manufacturing.

What were the “highlights” in your recent development of vaccines/immunotherapeutics?
immatics’ highlights underline the company’s rapidly growing and strong pipeline of oncology drug candidates: We successfully completed IMA901’s phase 2 study (RCC) in 2010 and patient recruitment in 2012, IMA910’s phase 2 study (CRC) in 2012 and have IMA942 against gastric cancer ready to enter the clinical studies.

What have been the most critical problems in developing products in your field, and how can your company’s technology help overcome these problems?
It has been a challenge to show a correlation between the patients’ immune response and the clinical outcome; we achieved it nevertheless by our standardized, systematic immunomonitoring of all patients in phase 2 studies for IMA901 (RCC) and IMA910 (CRC).

What is your company’s value proposition?
immatics offers novel multi-peptide based cancer vaccines, confirmed
to be overexpressed on real tumor tissue. Through our proprietary technology we’re able to produce off-the-shelf products, which enter the clinical stage in less than 24 months.

**What business development strategy do you pursue?**

*immatics* is looking for attractive partnerships for IMA910 (CRC) and IMA950 in glioma. Furthermore, *immatics* offers access to its unique technology platform XPresident in strategic collaborations.

**How does your company attract partners?**

*immatics* has a broad network of contacts in the pharmaceutical industry. Based on excellent data in both scientific publications and our clinical trials, attention has been generated. Furthermore, our business development team is present at most of the large international partnering conferences.

**Who are your most important partners?**

Currently, our most important partners are our collaborators in the clinical studies: Pfizer, CRUK among others. We are in partnering discussions with several undisclosed parties.

**How do you balance performing work in-house vs out-sourcing?**

We outsource work packages that are not part of our expertise and are less know-how intensive.

**What are your product development goals for the next 3 years?**

*immatics’* product development goals for the next 3 years contain the successful completion of IMA901’s phase 3 (RCC) and the successful completion of the two IMA950 studies in the UK as well as the US.

**For more information, please visit:**

www.immatics.com/