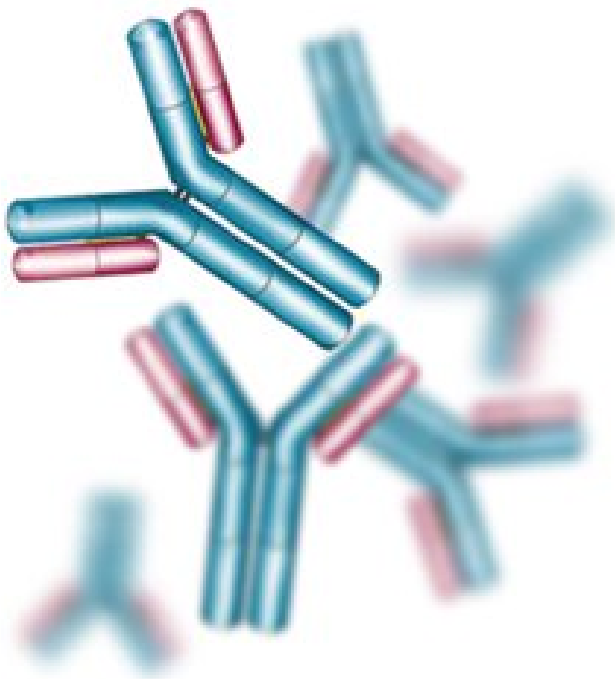


WuXi, OMT to develop therapeutic antibodies

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Singapore: WuXi PharmaTech, a leading pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device R&D outsourcing company with operations in China and the US, and Open Monoclonal Technology (OMT), an innovator in novel transgenic animals for developments of human therapeutic antibodies, entered into an agreement to use OMT's OmniRat to develop therapeutic antibody candidates for commercialization by WuXi's global customers.

Mr Brian Lundstrom, chief business officer, Open Monoclonal Antibody, told BioSpectrum that "OMT's collaboration with WuXi is initially focused on creating human antibodies against a series of clinically validated targets that WuXi can develop into preclinical stages using their integrated R&D infrastructure and subsequently license to third parties in China and globally. Such licensees may further continue to access WuXi's R&D services to clinical stage. In the collaboration, OMT will use its OmniRat platform to generate human antibodies. WuXi will use their integrated R&D infrastructure to advance each program towards the clinic.

Explaining his stand on the importance of collaborations between research institution and industry, he elaborated that "Collaborations are critical for research institutions and industry to benefit from each other's strengths. OMT is making its OmniRat platform available to academia worldwide; discoveries made by them can subsequently be licensed by industry and taken to the market place."

Talking about what the plans are for the company in future, he mentions that "Technically there are a number of trends such as adding toxic payloads to naked antibodies and making antibodies polyvalent. After Amgen's acquisition of Abgenix and BMS's acquisition of Medarex there are only few providers of transgenic animal platforms for generation of human antibodies. OMT is a leader in that segment. In the future we expect increased commoditization of human antibodies, a trend that OMT plans to lead."

There are a number of challenges that are faced during the production of antibodies. For instance, different antibody platforms like humanization and phage display have different drawbacks. Mr Brian highlights that "In contrast, OmniRat enables developers to skip humanization of animal-derived antibodies or lead-optimization of display candidates as OmniRat directly generates fully human antibodies with great specificity, affinity and manufacturability. Using animals to make human antibodies saves time and money because the immune system optimizes antibodies naturally; OMT refers to this as "naturally optimized human antibodies".