

Commercialising Discovery Demands More Than Great Science—It Requires the Right Ecosystem

June 25, 2026 | Influencers | By Ankit Kankar | ankit.kankar@mmactiv.com

At BIO 2026, Hemangi Pakala, Director of Technology Ventures at Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, explains why intellectual property, proof-of-concept funding, strategic partnerships, and start-up collaboration are critical to transforming laboratory discoveries into FDA-approved healthcare innovations.



Research institutions generate groundbreaking discoveries every year, yet only a small fraction successfully reach patients. **Speaking with BioSpectrum Asia during BIO 2026 in San Diego, Hemangi Pakala, Director of Technology Ventures at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation (OMRF),** discusses the essential ingredients for successful commercialisation, the growing influence of artificial intelligence and gene therapy, and how technology transfer offices can bridge the gap between scientific discovery and real-world clinical impact.

OMRF has successfully translated research into FDA-approved products. What are the key ingredients required for successful commercialization?

The first and most important ingredient is strong and innovative research. A foundation of discoveries with great potential for impact helps forge a path toward commercialization. With that in mind, OMRF scientists are focused on outcomes, which helps successfully transition a discovery to the clinic. Our scientists are also eager collaborators who work with the right partners to accomplish our goals.

How can research institutions better bridge the gap between discovery and market adoption?

In the Office of Technology Ventures, our focus is on appropriate and timely protection of intellectual property. If that step is lacking, nothing else can move forward. Something OMRF does particularly well is finding support and encouraging advancement of proof-of-concept stage research, which is critical before marketable discoveries can happen. Where institutions fall short in resources or experience, there is an opportunity to partner with entities that have the domain expertise critical to successful market adoption.

Which therapeutic and technology areas are generating the greatest innovation opportunities today?

Artificial intelligence and gene therapy with an aim toward personalized medicine.

What role do start-ups play in accelerating healthcare innovation?

Putting available resources and knowledge to optimal use through a closely-tied start-up is a catalyst to the commercialization process. While they aren't always the best fit, they can be a valuable tool in advancing discoveries toward widespread availability.

How do you evaluate technologies with the strongest potential for clinical and commercial impact?

Our Office of Technology Ventures remains familiar with every lab at OMRF to predict which studies may produce potential for diagnostic and treatment opportunities. Once presented with an invention disclosure, we perform market analysis to understand the available market for our technology as well as who the existing competitors are. We also work to identify the potential companies that may be good partners for this technology.