

Pfizer's BioNTech influenza deal – the bold latecomer

LONDON, UK----18st August 2018----ExpertREACT. There's growth in the global influenza vaccine market and the link between a better product and higher prices is now established (albeit mostly in the US). Poor vaccine efficacy (VE) resurfaces the agenda for the ultimate product, but can Pfizer really leap-frog the efforts of the established players?

This week US vaccine giant, **Pfizer Vaccines**, a company not usually involved with influenza vaccines, announced an exciting investment in the German mRNA vaccine company **BioNTech**. The deal could be worth up to \$425m (\$120m upfront equity). It initiates a bold collaboration to develop new influenza vaccines.

To date, commercial developers of mRNA vaccine technologies have attracted high interest from larger pharmaceutical companies and supranational grant authorities, but most deals have been directed to cancer, rare diseases (protein replacement) and metabolic indications e.g. Eli Lilly (CureVac AG), Merck & Co (Moderna) and AstraZeneca (Moderna). For infectious diseases and "true" prophylactic mRNA vaccine candidates activity has been less. We counted 21 mRNA clinical trials for infectious pathogens back in February 2018 versus 67 for cancer and most of these were investigating HIV (1).

Pfizer's recent investment in BioNTech not only brings excitement to influenza vaccine R&D but more focus on the mRNA vaccine sector as a whole. It follows on from another mRNA deal announced in June when Sanofi Pasteur invested \$45m upfront to Translate Bio for five undisclosed infectious disease pathogens (2). The multiyear collaboration will pursue 'next generation' vaccines. We bet one area of research is also for influenza.

Pfizer's deal does raise questions. There were quicker ways to enter the flu vaccine business and involvement of the other players in the mRNA space has not been productive so far. It must be about appropriate of platform technology, so why talk about influenza? In the following article **VacZine Analytics** dissects Pfizer's strategy.....

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- 1) **MarketVIEW:** mRNA vaccines (infectious diseases) (CAT No: VAMV079), March 2018
- 2) Translate Bio Announces Agreement with Sanofi Pasteur to Develop Vaccines for Infectious Diseases using Novel mRNA Technology. Business Wire. June 11, 2018

About VacZine Analytics

VacZine Analytics is an established strategic research agency based in the United Kingdom. Its aim is to provide disease and commercial analysis for the vaccine industry and help build the case for developing new vaccines and biologics.

For more information please visit our website www.vaczine-analytics.com

