

Stock Data

Share Price:	95.5p
Market Cap:	£198.6m
Shares in issue:	208.0m

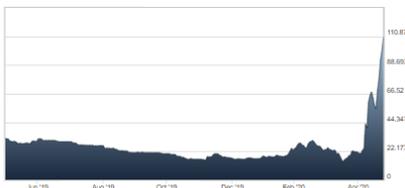
Company Profile

Sector:	Healthcare
Ticker:	AVCT
Exchange:	AIM

Activities

Avacta Group plc ('Avacta', 'the Group') is a biotechnology company which has developed the proprietary Affimer® technology platform, a unique engineered alternative to antibodies. Affimer proteins can be developed quickly for drug development and a wide range of life sciences applications in the diagnostics and research sectors.

Share price performance



Source: [LSE](#)

Past performance is not an indication of future performance.

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Avacta Group plc

Avacta has announced its second partnership to exploit the recently generated Affimer binders to the SARS-COV-2 virus in a high-throughput COVID-19 antigen test. This follows the Group's stated intention to partner its SARS-COV-2 spike protein Affimer reagents with several select companies in order to support antigen test development on multiple diagnostic platforms. This is expected to contribute most effectively to the urgent need for rapid antigen tests to diagnose this coronavirus infection, such that it can be mass produced for rapid, professional screening of large populations and, potentially for self-testing by consumers themselves. This is crucial to limiting and tracking the spread of this disease. The two companies are aiming to have a BAMS™ test ready for clinical validation, regulatory approval and manufacturing in June. Although the full terms of business have not been disclosed, Avacta will receive a royalty on the sales of Adeptrix test kits. As such this represents another important step forward, not only in terms of development of a reputation-building, high-profile new product of global significance, but also in terms of Avacta maximising the near and longer-term commercial opportunities for its platform.

Following on from the Avacta/Cytiva Partnership announced just five weeks ago, this new collaboration with [Adeptrix](#) (Beverly, MA, USA) is to develop a high throughput COVID-19 antigen test using Adeptrix's proprietary [bead-assisted mass spectrometry \('BAMS™'\)](#) platform. The two companies will collaborate in order to develop and manufacture an Affimer-based BAMS coronavirus antigen test that will provide clinicians with a significant expansion of the available testing capacity for COVID-19 infection in hospitals.

Adeptrix's novel BAMS platform combines enrichment of the sample to improve sensitivity with the power of mass-spectrometry to improve specificity. Hundreds of samples per day can be analysed by a single technician using BAMS, exceeding the capacity of single PCR machine and thereby making it a very attractive high-throughput technique for COVID-19 screening in the clinical setting. The diagnostic test will allow hospitals around the world to utilise their existing installed base of mass spectrometers that are not currently used for COVID-19 testing, thus contributing significantly to the increase in global testing capacity. Significantly also, mass spectrometry can enhance the diagnostic utility of immunoassays, as it is capable of monitoring both existing and emerging viral strains by accurately measuring the molecular components of the virus. BAMS thus provides an ideal multiplexing platform to obtain higher specificity for monitoring COVID-19 infection. Avacta's own recently developed Affimer reagents that bind the SARS-COV-2 spike protein, will be used to provide the capture and enrichment of the virus particle from the sample which could be saliva, nasopharyngeal swabs or serum.

Development of a BAMS test capable of diagnosing whether a person has the COVID-19 infection at any specific moment is a rapid process and the two companies are aiming to have a final version ready for clinical validation, regulatory approval and manufacturing in June. Adeptrix and Avacta are already in discussion with large-scale manufacturing partners to rapidly deploy this new high throughput test around the world.

On 6th April 2020, Avacta confirmed its conditional raising of a further £3.75m (taking its total raise to £5.75m) through an equity placing at 18p/share in response to substantial institutional interest. Along with the newly found and urgent need to respond to calls for a high-throughput COVID-19 antigen test, the new funds are also being put towards the Group's other key objective, that of completing the Phase I clinical trial of AVA6000 (pro-doxorubicin). Based on anticipated burn for the COVID-19 test strip as detailed above and its existing programmes, TPI estimates Avacta should still hold cash c.£8.0m by its December year end. It will initiate the Phase I trial of its lead asset late in 2020 and initial data will be available within a few months, suggesting the Group is now fully-funded to complete this trial. Beyond the obvious reputational and commercial, albeit presently unquantifiable, short and longer-term opportunities that could emerge from its new partnerships with Cytiva and Adeptrix, such developments represent a major inflection point along with potential for creation of significant value for Avacta, while it also continues to forward its partnered programmes and licensing relationships for its diagnostics reagents.

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