

Stock Data

Share Price:	123.0p
Market Cap:	£306.0m*
Shares in issue:	248.8m*

**Post-Placing numbers*

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.

1-year Share price performance



Source: [LSE](#)

Past performance is not an indication of future performance.

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Avacta Group plc

Avacta has announced that collaborative work with the [Centre for Virus Research](#) at the University of Glasgow, has shown that Affimer reagents which bind to the SARS-COV-2 virus spike protein prevent infection of human cells by such a model virus and therefore provide a potential 'neutralising' therapy for COVID-19 infection. This is significant considering the uncertainties around the timeline for developing and deploying an effective vaccine. It is also critical information that will help Avacta identify a suitable license deal with a pharmaceutical partner that has the resources to carry out an accelerated clinical development programme.

Virus neutralising therapies

Affimer reagents have key benefits compared with antibodies as virus neutralising therapies. Their small size and high solubility mean that a much higher concentration of Affimer molecules can be used in the drug formulation to more effectively block the spike proteins on each virus particle and so better protect the patient. Bispecific and trispecific Affimer neutralising therapies that bind to more than one part of the spike protein could ensure the effectiveness of the neutralising therapy even if the virus' spike protein mutates.

Avacta has recently reported that several of its Affimer reagents that had been generated to develop COVID-19 antigen tests inhibited the interaction between the coronavirus' spike protein and a receptor found on human cells, called ACE2, which the virus spike protein binds to as the first step in infecting cells. It has since successfully completed the initial phase of a collaboration with Professor David Bhella at the University of Glasgow, demonstrating that these 'neutralising' reagents prevent a SARS-COV-2 model virus from entering human cells and therefore provide a potential therapy for COVID-19.

Attracting a Big Pharma development partner

Avacta is now working with the University to collect a comprehensive body of data suitable for presentation to large pharmaceutical partners with the necessary resources to rapidly develop such potential therapeutic candidates. Given the reported excellent performance of these novel reagents in the assays, and the other benefits specific to Affimer reagents, there is potential for considerable and immediate interest. Target candidates could potentially include [AstraZeneca](#), [GSK](#), [Boehringer Ingelheim](#) and numerous others who have already committed significant investment to developing neutralising therapies for COVID-19.

Approaching a major inflection point?

Having recently put the necessary financial resources in place, Avacta now appears positioned to reach a major inflection point. Timing is of course of the essence for all COVID-19 product developments. Today's news confirms rapid progress with the Group's key platform-derived neutralising technology, for which its Board sees significant potential for a therapy that could help prevent infection and limit the progression of the disease. Adopted by a large and well-resourced partner, a neutralising Affimer therapy could potentially be developed more quickly than a vaccine, for which Avacta considers the likelihood of success to be high. Combined with the point-of-care rapid antigen test it also has under development with [Cytiva](#), and the [BAMS™](#) diagnostic test for the COVID-19 infection being developed with its partner [Adeprax](#) (Beverly MA, USA), along with the Group's core novel cancer immunotherapies combining its two proprietary platforms, Affimer® biotherapeutics and preCISION™ tumour targeted chemotherapy, Avacta appears to be ideally placed for the creation of significant short and long term value for shareholders.

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