Imophoron

Sector: Health

Funding stage: Seed

What is it?

Imophoron is developing a new and unique platform to produce vaccines that are stable at temperatures of up to 50°C, tackling the cold chain problem of the vaccine industry. Imophoron also intend to deliver vaccines intranasally, providing an over-the-counter nasal spray alternative to injections for common viruses such as the flu.

Currently vaccines need to be stored on ice, some at temperatures as low as -80°C (for example, in the case of RNA-based COVID vaccines). This is not easy to maintain, and 25% of vaccines degrade by the time they reach their destination after being exposed to higher temperatures.*

The cold chain problems result in a significant reduction in the shelf-life and efficiency of the vaccine, huge cost increases, and distribution limitations in areas with hotter climates, all of which impact access for patients in countries facing critical issues due to lack of vaccinations.

Why we like it

The COVID pandemic has not only highlighted some of the biggest inefficiencies across the global healthcare system, but also shone a light on how poorly the world's governments and healthcare systems are set-up to respond to biological threats, infectious disease and pandemics. The WHO and other non-profit organisations (such as The Gates Foundation) highlight that governments, investors and pharma pour money into vaccine development when a new pandemic or epidemic arrives, however this interest soon plummets as the epidemic or pandemic is over.

This demonstrates the need for investment and research into platform technologies that can accelerate the vaccine development and approval process, and develop vaccine technologies which can be tailored rather than starting from scratch every time. Imophoron's disruptive platform technology aims to achieve exactly this.

Who are we backing?

Professor Imre Berger and Frederic Garzoni - Co-founders. Imre has decades of deep technical expertise in this space, where he has spun out three companies and exited one to Pfizer. Both Imre and Frederic have led scale-up research and development facilities where scalability is at the forefront of their focus, which is paramount to biotech businesses.

*Iata, How to become CEIV Pharma Certified, 2020.

What our fund managers say

Luke Hakes – Partner

"The vaccine market is anticipated to grow to $7.1 billion by 2027, representing a huge opportunity for Imophoron. If successful, this platform will allow rapid design of vaccines for new viruses with a longer shelf life and lower costs, impacting the wellbeing of people in locations that are poorly served today."

Key risks

While we are really excited about this company's potential, please bear in mind that like all early stage businesses, it's likely to encounter both challenges and opportunities along the way and ultimately may not be successful.

Early stage investing is considered high risk and your capital may be lost. Any associated tax benefits are subject to qualification, personal circumstances and legislation.

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