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In Vivo's 2021 Rising Leaders: Recognizing Talent Across The Life Sciences

by Lucie Ellis-Taitt

Revealed: *In Vivo's* list of 30 Rising Leaders across the biopharma, medtech and health technology sectors. Find out who is in the spotlight this year.

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Marking the second edition of the 'Rising Leaders' list, *In Vivo* has highlighted entrepreneurs and innovators who represent the next wave of creativity in health care. Included are academics, CEOs of small and mid-sized companies, rising employees in larger biopharma and medtech businesses, as well as people driving unique health initiatives worldwide.

There is no age restriction to being included; the 30 people below have been recognized for bringing something new to the game. The list focuses on achievements, talent, creativity and strong leadership qualities. Look out for other features in this Rising Leaders series, including exclusive interviews with innovators and disruptors, alongside insights from more established industry executives on leading through times of change.

In Vivo's 2021 Rising Leaders are listed in alphabetical order.

Jamal Elicera
El-Mosleh



Temie LifeBank
Giwa-Tubosun



Sina Cognetivity
HabibiNe science



Sarah Arecor
Howell



Tadahisa Healios
Kagimoto



Hayden AbbVie
Kennedy



KatiaFe
Lang





Nazli Azimi
CEO
Bioniz Therapeutics

Nazli Azimi is the founder and CEO of *Bioniz Therapeutics, Inc.*, a biotech developing anti-cytokine therapies targeting oncology and autoimmune diseases.

Bioniz is building a pipeline of novel peptide therapeutics which selectively inhibit functionally redundant cytokines, while leaving the rest of the cytokine network unaffected. The company's lead product is BNZ-1, which targets cutaneous T-cell lymphoma and alopecia areata by simultaneously inhibiting cytokines IL-2, IL-9 and IL-15. BNZ-1 is expected to enter Phase III trials soon, while the company's second candidate – BNZ-2 targeting celiac disease – is in Phase I trials.

Azimi co-invented the technology platform these therapies are based on. Prior to founding Bioniz, she founded another biotech – Dermaheal USA – a dermatology company acquired by Caregen in 2013.

Azimi holds a Doctor of Pharmacy and PhD, and completed a post-doctoral fellowship in immunology at the National Institute of Health with a focus on cytokine biology. She is the author of over 30 peer-reviewed publication in areas ranging from immunology to neurological diseases. In 2017, Azimi was one of the EY Entrepreneurial Winning Women, and in 2019 won the Women in Business award in Orange County. She also won first prize from the International Cytokine Society for research on cytokine inhibitors.



Denise Barbato
Founder and CEO
SoundWaves

Denise Barbato is a female entrepreneur and a rising leader who has 25 years' experience, specializing in high-risk obstetrical and gynecologic ultrasounds. She used her entrepreneurial spirit to build a start-up company that is now 12 years old and expanding again, post-COVID-19.

In setting up SoundWaves LLC, a Miami-based provider of diagnostic ultrasound services to obstetricians, gynecologists and orthopedic surgeons, she used her first-hand experience of delivering detailed, accurate results to physicians.

In 1999, she trained with perinatologists and gynecologists at private offices, and at the University of Miami, specializing in high-risk obstetrical and gynecological ultrasounds. Until 2009, she worked for Baptist Health Systems performing general ultrasound.

Since 2009, as CEO of SoundWaves, she has built a network of over 20 private offices in southern Florida, and has tripled in size, building long standing professional relationships along the way.

In 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, she faced choices in how to handle a situation where business was falling as establishments were closing their doors. It was a "trial by fire," but COVID taught her valuable lessons, particularly the need to "learn how to help yourself before you can help others."

Barbato qualified at the Medical Campus at Miami Dade. She completed her studies at an accredited ultrasound program at Broward College in 1995. She is a member of the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers and is registered in Abdominal and OB/GYN Ultrasound.



Martin-Immanuel Bittner
Co-Founder and CEO
Arctoris

Martin-Immanuel Bittner is the CEO of Arctoris, a fully automated drug discovery platform company combining robotics, AI and blockchain. Bittner co-founded the company in Oxford, UK, in 2016.

Bittner qualified as a medical doctor and worked as an oncologist in Germany before moving to Oxford to pursue a DPhil (PhD) in cancer drug discovery. Upon entering laboratory research, he was surprised to see how much time scientists spend manually performing experiments. This propelled Bittner to launch Arctoris, which allows researchers to remotely run experiments using robotics and end-to-end automation to achieve higher precision and reproducibility while being liberated to spend more time on higher value tasks.

Arctoris aims to augment the work of researchers by utilizing advanced technology to reinvent R&D processes. From its beginning as an Oxford startup, the company has grown its team, platform and reach, now operating globally with partners in biotech and pharma worldwide.

In reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, scientists in academic centers and companies around the world desperately began searching for novel therapeutics and vaccines. But with lockdowns and limited access to laboratories, researchers were being forced to work from home, putting research continuity at risk. In early 2020, to help scientists continue their R&D, and ensure research continuity, Arctoris established a broad range of remotely accessible COVID-19 assays. These included biochemical profiling for COVID-19 drug targets, as well as cellular and molecular assays conducted in its state-of-the-art robotic facility in Oxford.

In 2018, Bittner was elected a member of the Young Academy of the German National Academy of Sciences in recognition of his research achievements.

[See the 30
Rising
Leaders Of
2021
Infographic](#)



Joshua Blake
PhD Student
University of Cambridge

Joshua Blake joined the Medical Research Council Biostatistics Unit (BSU) of the University of Cambridge, UK, as a PhD student in October 2019. Prior to starting at the BSU, Blake studied Computer Science at the University of Cambridge, writing a dissertation considering how the London Underground could spread an epidemic, as well as studying topics such as machine learning and computer security.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the university's BSU was thrown into a new way of working. A team of statisticians during the early period of the pandemic worked to carry out rapid analysis of the developing situation in the UK. Blake stepped away from his studies to

support this work, focused on understanding and mitigating the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Blake was part of a team of statistical modelers at the BSU working to provide regular now-casts and forecasts of COVID-19 infections and deaths in England. This information feeds directly to the SAGE sub-group, the Scientific Pandemic Influenza sub-group on Modelling (SPIM), and to regional Public Health England (PHE) teams. Blake has also helped with the regular running and improvement of the epidemiological model which generates the forecast, and is an author on the regular reports released by the unit.

Since returning to his PhD studies, Blake has been working on methodology to estimate the incidence of new infections from random testing data collected by the Office For National Statistics. Initial parts of this work have, in recent months, been used by the ONS to produce estimates which they publish each Friday in the UK.

Blake said: “When I started my PhD in October 2019, I never imagined I would be applying what I have learnt so soon and in such crucial circumstances. The fast-moving and time-critical nature of this work is not what I expected going into academia, but I hope that I have played a part in improving the response to the crisis.”

SPI-M gives expert advice to the Department of Health and Social Care and wider UK government on scientific matters relating to the UK’s response to an influenza pandemic (or other emerging human infectious disease threats). It has more than 60 members from academic institutions, Public Health England, the Ministry of Defence, as well as pharmaceutical executives contributing in personal capacity.



Kate Broderick
SVP of Research and Development
INOVIO Pharmaceuticals

In her role as *INOVIO Pharmaceuticals, Inc.*’s senior vice president of research and development,

Kate Broderick, an accomplished scientist and vaccine expert, leads a team of researchers discovering and developing DNA medicines. Working out of the company's research labs in San Diego, she is focused on the development and enhanced delivery of a broad range of DNA medicines for infectious diseases and cancers. Most recently, she was responsible for the development of a DNA vaccine for COVID-19. She also led the teams that brought the first in human Lassa fever vaccine into the clinic as well as advanced the development of a DNA vaccine for the MERS virus.

Over the course of her career, Broderick has authored and co-authored more than 60 peer-reviewed articles. And she has participated, by invitation, in advisory meetings convened by the World Health Organization to discuss DNA vaccines and their delivery.

Broderick is a co-inventor on multiple patents related to DNA vaccine delivery and has served as a principal investigator on grants, awards and contracts from leading government agencies and not-for-profit organizations, including the National Institutes of Health, the US Department of Defense, the Small Business Innovation Research program, and including a \$56m award from the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).

In late April 2021, the US government pulled funding for a Phase III trial of INOVIO's COVID-19 vaccine candidate, INO-4800. However, the Department of Defense is continuing to fund an ongoing mid-stage trial. INO-4800 is the only nucleic-acid based vaccine that is stable at room temperature for more than a year. The company also has a pan-COVID vaccine in development, INO-4802, targeting variants of novel coronavirus.

With a keen interest in electroporation device design in the context of transdermal delivery, Broderick helped to produce prototypes and designs of INOVIO's proprietary smart device CELLECTRA, which delivers its DNA medicines directly into cells in the body.

Broderick received her PhD from the University of Glasgow, Scotland, and conducted post-doctoral research at the University of California, San Diego. She joined INOVIO in 2006.



Anne Carpenter

Institute Scientist and Imagine Platform Senior Director
Broad Institute, Harvard and MIT

Anne Carpenter is senior director of the imaging platform at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, where she is also an institute scientist. She is a pioneer in image-based profiling, the extraction of rich, unbiased information from images for a number of important applications in drug discovery and functional genomics.

Carpenter's team is focused on research for extracting the richest information possible from biological images, particularly microscopy images from high-throughput experiments. Carpenter directs a group of computer scientists and biologists to develop image analysis and data exploration methods and software that are open-source and freely available to the public. The team adapts these tools to address a variety of biological questions in the laboratories of collaborators in the Broad community and worldwide.

The Carpenter Lab is best known for its open-source software CellProfiler and CellProfiler Analyst. The group is leading community efforts "to bring deep learning to biologists, for segmentation and classification." The CellProfiler software is used by thousands of biologists worldwide.

Carpenter, who has a PhD in cell biology from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, describes her lab's major focus as the ability to use "machine learning, especially deep learning, to capture information about genetic and chemical perturbations of cells in order to probe the causes and cures of disease."

Notably, Carpenter is a scientific advisor for Recursion Pharmaceuticals, a clinical-stage biotechnology company decoding biology by integrating technological innovations across biology, chemistry, automation, data science and engineering to industrialize drug discovery.

She is an NIH Maximizing Investigators' Research Award (MIRA) investigator and has received recognition and research funding from numerous other groups including the Human Frontiers in Science program and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Carpenter was previously named to

the top 100 list of AI Leaders in Drug Discovery and Healthcare by Deep Knowledge Analytics, and she is an honorary fellow of the Royal Microscopical Society.



John Cassidy
Principal
Arix Bioscience

John Cassidy is a principal in the investment team at Arix Bioscience. He joined the team in 2018 as an investment associate and became principal in 2020.

Cassidy has been involved in a number of investments, including STipe Therapeutics, for which Arix co-led a €20m investment round, and Twelve Bio, a gene editing company founded by Arix in 2020. He serves as a board director at both STipe Therapeutics and Twelve Bio, and is also a board observer at Depixus.

Prior to Arix, Cassidy previously worked at L.E.K. Consulting LLP, as a consultant in the life sciences practice, responsible for strategy and transaction support for pharma, biotech and private equity clients.

He holds a first-class degree in biochemistry from Imperial College London and a PhD in neuroscience from University College London sponsored by Pfizer and the Medical Research Council. Furthermore, Cassidy has published research in journals including PNAS, Nature Communications, eLife and Journal of Neuroscience.



Mark Chakravarty
Non-Executive Director
NICE

Mark Chakravarty, a business leader and physician, is currently a senior advisor and investor at Quantified on a part-time basis. He was previously senior vice president, head of communications & patient advocacy and head of launch excellence, at [Novartis AG](#).

In March 2021, Chakravarty was appointed as a non-executive director on the board for the National Institute for Health and Care excellence (NICE), the UK's public body that provides national guidance and advice to improve outcomes for people using the NHS and other public health and social care services.

He is also a member of the NICE Appeal Panel and was a member of the NICE Technology Appraisal Committee from 2003 to 2012.

Upon joining the board, Chakravarty said he was “delighted to be joining NICE at time when innovation in technology and biomedical science has the potential to have an unparalleled impact on humankind.” He noted that NICE’s role to support evidence-based decision making at the front line of health and social care had never been more critical than during the COVID-19 pandemic. “I am honored to be joining the board and look forward to supporting the management and staff in their ambitious program to transform the way the NICE produces, presents and updates its guidance and advice.”

Chakravarty has previous experience working for the NHS, having been a medical advisor in the 1990s for the NHS executive regional task force, Northwest Regional Office. He also spent many years in roles of increasing seniority at Proctor & Gamble.

**Jun Chen**

Assistant Professor
UCLA

Jun Chen is an assistant professor in the department of bioengineering at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research focuses on nanotechnology and bioelectronics for energy, sensing, and therapy applications in the form of smart textiles, wearables and body area sensor networks.

Chen created the technology behind a ‘smart translation glove’ being developed at UCLA that is able to convert American Sign Language into spoken English. The glove uses stretchable sensors and a circuit board to wirelessly send signals to a smartphone app – also developed by the UCLA research group – which translates hand gestures into English. The glove can analyze up to 660 different gestures, has a recognition rate of over 98% and is able to translate gestures into speech in less than a second. It has a simple design and weighs less than 100g.

Chen expects the glove to be ready for commercialization in around 3-5 years. The group is working on improving the technology to be ready for mass production. Researchers are also hoping the glove could learn how to translate into languages beyond English, too.

A potential commercial use could be to help people learn sign language, as the technology allows for immediate feedback as users are practicing their signing.

Chen has published two books as well as more than 100 journal articles, printed in the likes of *Chemical Reviews*, *Nature Energy*, *Nature Electronics*, *Nature Sustainability*, *Nature Communications*, *Joule*, *Matter*, and many others.

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“I really want to use my invented technology to change the world, or at least improve our way or living.”

- Jun Chen



Christina Curtis

Associate Professor of Medicine and Genetics
Stanford University School of Medicine

Christina Curtis leads the cancer computational and systems biology group at Stanford and serves as co-director of the molecular tumor board at the Stanford Cancer Institute. Her research is focused on the development and application of innovative computational and experimental approaches to improve the diagnosis, treatment and earlier detection of cancer.

The Curtis laboratory “leverages genome-scale data, coupled with computational and statistical

modelling and iterative experimentation to define the molecular determinants and dynamics of tumor progression and to develop predictive and prognostic biomarkers.”

The lab’s three key goals are to:

1. Model the evolutionary dynamics of tumor initiation, progression and therapeutic resistance
2. Elucidate disease etiology and novel molecular targets through integrative analyses of high throughput omic data
3. Develop techniques for the systems-level interpretation of genotype-phenotype associations in cancer

Curtis's research has helped to redefine the molecular map of breast cancer and led to new paradigms in understanding how human tumors progress. She holds a PhD in molecular and computation biology from the University of Southern California. Among her many accolades, in 2018 Curtis was awarded the NIH Director’s Pioneer Award.



Eran Eden
Co-Founder and CEO
MeMed

MeMed Diagnostics, headquartered in Haifa, Israel, is a personalized diagnostics company focused on developing host response technologies to tackle key clinical dilemmas.

Eran Eden co-founded MeMed in 2009 to solve a seemingly simple problem: assessing quickly whether patients have a bacterial or viral infection and aiding the physician to decide whether to prescribe antibiotic treatment. Eden’s team has developed technology that listens to the immune system through the analysis of immune biomarkers, helping to resolve this common dilemma in real-time.

Over the past year, MeMed has built on its technology and has been working with physicians to develop tests to assess the prognosis of COVID-19 patients, helping to identify those who might develop severe symptoms – contributing towards better resource allocation and patient management. The company raised \$70m in 2018 via a series C financing round.

Eden has combined his business and academic experience pioneering the development of cutting-edge multidisciplinary technologies that synergize data-science and machine learning, molecular biology and clinical applications. He holds a BSc in computer engineering, BA in biology, and MSc in computer science (all cum laude) from the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, and a PhD in systems biology from the Weizmann Institute of Science, where he was also a lecturer of data mining.

Eden is also a co-author for more than 90 granted patents and pending applications and over 20 peer-reviewed publications. He is the recipient of multiple awards including the prestigious GE and Science Prize for Promising Life Scientists.



Jamal El-Mosleh
Co-Founder and CEO
Elicera

Elicera Therapeutics AB is a clinical stage immuno-oncology company developing cell and gene therapies for immune-based cancer treatments. The company's pipeline includes four drug candidates, two of which are in the field of oncolytic viruses and two in the field of CAR T-cell therapies, in addition to a platform technology called iTANK (ImmunoTherapies Activated with Nap for efficient Killing) for further immune enhancement of treatments in both fields.

The most advanced drug candidate, ELC-100, is being tested in a clinical Phase I/II trial, sponsored by Uppsala University. The company is expected to launch an IPO in the first half of 2021.

El-Mosleh was previously CEO of Annexin Pharmaceuticals AB, a biotechnology company in the Annexin A5 field for the treatment of various cardiovascular diseases; and Immunicum AB, an immuno-oncology company listed on NASDAQ First North.



Temie Giwa-Tubosun
Founder and CEO
LifeBank Nigeria

Temie Giwa-Tubosun's business addresses in particular the high death rates in developing countries of women who die due to hemorrhage at birth.

Giwa-Tubosun founded LifeBank in 2016. The company uses a unique supply chain/distribution model to collect blood from registered blood banks and deliver it to patients in hospitals in West Africa and Kenya.

It is estimated that blood shortages in Nigeria contribute to the deaths of 152,000 anemic children and 37,000 pregnant women each year, and are responsible for innumerable complications for women immediately after childbirth. Nigeria also has the highest rate of maternal mortality in Africa (and second in the world after India) and there are many problems plaguing its health systems ranging from poor infrastructure to a shortage of doctors.

In 2020, LifeBank Nigeria also began supplying PPE for COVID-19. And in December last year, Giwa-Tubosun was awarded the Global Citizen Prize for Business Leaders, for her work in addressing blood shortages in Nigeria and LifeBank's work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LifeBank Nigeria's backers include the Gates Foundation and the Chan-Zuckerberg Foundation.

**Sina Habibi**

Co-Founder and CEO

Cognetivity Neurosciences

Sina Habibi has a drive to simplify complex challenges and develop compelling and collaborative ways to solve them. He saw that projects focusing on early testing for dementia were increasingly common, but the resulting technologies were falling short in terms of results.

Teaming up with Cambridge University PhD student and computational neuroscientist Seyed-Mahdi Khaligh-Razavi, he co-developed proof-of-concept data for a visual challenge method, whereby images are represented on the retina and transferred to the visual and pre-frontal cortex, with responses made using the motor cortex.

Cognetivity Neurosciences was formed to develop the ICA (Integrated Cognitive Assessment) test using natural images that are presented quickly to participants who are asked to accurately indicate whether they have seen a pre-specified image category.

In addition to business executive roles, Habibi has experience in nanotechnology and synthetic biology research, product management, and high-tech consultancy (big data and fin-tech).

Habibi has been a member of Cambridge University Entrepreneurs (CUE) since 2010 and has acted as chair. CUE is an entrepreneurial student society that has funded over 60 start-ups worth over \$300m.



Sarah Howell

CEO

Arecor

Sarah Howell was appointed CEO of [Arecor Ltd.](#) in 2015 and has led its transformation into a successful clinical-stage biotechnology company. This journey included signing multiple collaborations with leading pharmaceutical companies including [Hikma Pharmaceuticals plc](#), and the rapid progression of Arecor's fast acting insulin formulation, AT247, which has successfully completed initial clinical trials. The company has also recently announced its intention to launch on AIM, a sub-market of the London Stock Exchange.

Howell told *In Vivo* that Arecor is focused on “affordable innovation” that can bring benefits to patients, particularly in disease areas with large, and growing, patient populations such as diabetes.

Arecor is focused on bringing innovative medicines to market through the enhancement of existing therapies using its proprietary Arestat technology. Arestat is a world leading, innovative formulation technology platform which significantly enhances the properties of therapeutic proteins and peptides. The technology has the potential to deliver superior formulations of both new and existing products. The company has a dual strategy for partnering: it works with biopharmas as a technology partner, to discover and develop formulations; and it aims to collaborate with partners for its own pipeline therapies once these reach the later stages of development.

Howell has a strong background in clinical and commercial pharmaceutical product development, manufacture, supply and licensing across a range of product types and therapeutic areas. Prior to joining Arecor, she was vice president, CMC and technical development, at [BTG plc](#). She also has experience in big pharma, having been a team leader at [GlaxoSmithKline plc](#).

Howell holds a BSc in chemistry from the University of Birmingham and a PhD in physical organic chemistry from the University of St Andrews.

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“Like many industries the life sciences sector is changing. There's still a need for innovation, but it needs to be affordable innovation.”

- Sarah Howell



Tadahisa Kagimoto
Founder, Chair and CEO
Healios

After graduating from medical school at Kyushu University in Japan, Tadahisa “Hardy” Kagimoto travelled to the US to work, where he came to understand that medical research combined with an entrepreneurial drive could bring cures to patients at scale.

Kagimoto is the founder, chair and CEO of Healios K.K., a biotechnology company developing stem cell derived regenerative therapies to treat major areas of unmet medical need, including

solid tumors, ischemic stroke and acute respiratory distress syndrome.

Prior to founding Healios, Kagimoto founded and was CEO of Aqumen Biopharmaceuticals K.K., which developed the de facto standard adjuvant used in eye surgery worldwide. Prior to founding Aqumen, he was a clinical ophthalmologist.

Kagimoto graduated from Kyushu University School of Medicine, and he holds patents in the US, Europe, Japan and China. He is a director on the board of Athersys, Inc., a US biotechnology company, and the board of Mobile Hospital International, a non-profit organization that supports hospital ships for use in natural disaster recovery efforts.

Kagimoto started Aqumen in 2005 to address diseases of the eye. The company has contributed to improving sight for many thousands of patients worldwide. The success of that business confirmed to Kagimoto that it was possible through entrepreneurship to convert research from a Japanese university into a product that could help patients on a global scale.

In 2011, Kagimoto started Healios, which has grown into a leader in the development of innovative, engineered iPSC derived therapies, with its front-running program focused on curing the leading cause of death due to disease globally, solid cancers. Through the development of Healios's proprietary, gene-edited universal donor iPSC platform, and products derived from it, Kagimoto has positioned Healios to unlock the full potential of iPSC derived therapies across several domains, including immuno-oncology, diseases of the eye and liver disease.

At the same time, Healios is driving forward a somatic stem cell treatment for ischemic stroke and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) patients in Japan, leveraging the favorable Japanese regulatory framework for regenerative medicine.



Hayden Kennedy
Corporate VP of Global Health Policy
AbbVie

Hayden Kennedy leads the global policy and US access strategies team in government affairs at [AbbVie Inc.](#) Under her leadership, the global policy team analyzes US and international public policy proposals to understand the impact on AbbVie and patients. The team also advocates for access to AbbVie's products in Medicare and Medicaid, engages third party organizations to develop solutions to public policy issues and engages with internal brand teams to understand the unique barriers for patients by therapeutic area.

Prior to joining AbbVie, Kennedy spent almost 10 years as a senior health policy advisor in the US Senate. She worked for Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) under Senator Mike Enzi's (R-WY) leadership and for the Senate Finance Committee under Senator Orrin Hatch's (R-UT) leadership. She received her Master's degree in government and Master's in business administration at the Johns Hopkins University, Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and the Carey School of Business.

Kennedy received a BA from American University with an interdisciplinary major in the areas of communications, law, economics and government (CLEG). She was also a fellow at the Bryce Harlow Foundation, an organization that supports government affairs professionals dedicated to maintaining integrity in one of the nation's oldest professions. *National Journal* previously recognized Kennedy as one of the *Most Influential Washington Women Under 35*.



Katia Lang
Co-Founder
FemTech Lab

Serial entrepreneur Katia Lang is the co-founder of FemTech Lab – the world's first independent FemTech accelerator. She is passionate about supporting innovative technology, especially in the underfunded and under-prioritized female health and wellness sector.

FemTech Lab's cohort of 10 start-ups are taken through a three-month accelerator program. This helps founders to develop their products, access relevant go-to-market channels, and raise

funds. World-leading experts from organizations including Google, Maven Clinic and London & Partners offer their advice and mentorship as part of the program. (Also see "[Direct To Consumer Approach Underscores Femtech's Disruptive Potential](#)" - In Vivo, 10 Feb, 2021.)

Lang has built four companies from the ground up and is the original founder of the world's first newspaper dedicated to FinTech, *The FinTech Times*, creating a global media brand in just four years. She successfully exited the company in January 2020.

She has a degree from St. Petersburg State University and an MBA from the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland.



Brittany Latson
Managing Partner
HashtagHealth

Brittany Latson is a co-founder and managing partner at HashtagHealth, a social media agency exclusively specialized in health care. The company partners “with dynamic health care companies and advocacy groups worldwide that are passionate about giving patients and health care professionals a voice where they need it most: social media.”

Latson began her career in healthcare marketing as an account manager at a start-up agency after working for almost a decade at the Walt Disney Corporation. After successful stints in account roles at the BGB Group and McCann RCW, she connected with former colleague and friend Kristin Hassan to spearhead the Pharma Social Media Division at DEI Worldwide, an interactive social agency.

In 2015, Latson and Hassan launched HashtagHealth. Latson’s agency experience and work in guest services, coupled with her study of molecular biology at Chapman University, provided her with the fundamentals for building a unique company with strong client partnerships.

As managing partner, account and operations at HashtagHealth, Latson has built a diverse and inclusive team to support pivotal campaigns that allow clients to break new ground in the social media realm, and develop unique, impactful social campaigns across a wide range of disease states.

HashtagHealth has roughly 30 employees and has previously worked with biopharma companies like Amgen, Alexion and Eisai. She holds a BS in molecular Biology from Chapman University.



Szabolcs Nagy
Co-Founder and CEO
Turbine

Szabolcs Nagy is the CEO and co-founder of Turbine, a private European biotechnology company developing a simulation-based, scalable drug discovery platform.

Turbine is based in Budapest with roots in Cambridge, UK. The Simulated Cell technology is focused on the discovery of novel therapies for unmet oncology needs, which the team aims to take through to clinical proof-of-concept and beyond. The technology has been validated in numerous collaborations with pharmaceutical companies, including German big pharma Bayer.

In 2021, the company closed a pre-series A round raising €5.7m (\$6.85m). The transatlantic round was co-led by new investors Accel and XTX Ventures and included Boston Millenia Partners who joined the existing syndicate comprising Delin Ventures, Atlantic Labs and o2h Ventures.

Nagy used to consult for The Medical Futurist and is the former head of marketing for Tresorit, a global secure cloud technology start-up. With his understanding of molecular biology, oncology and AI, he translates simulated biology into real world impact by pinpointing the most challenging aspects of today's drug development workflow. He is responsible for building the team at Turbine, which is dedicated both to sound science and delivering results.

**Kave Niksefat**

VP and General Manager, Inflammation Business Unit
Amgen

Kave Niksefat is the vice president and general manager of *Amgen, Inc.*'s inflammation business unit, which represents about 60% of the company's sales with leading products such as Otezla and Enbrel.

Niksefat joined Amgen in 2015 as the executive director of US pricing and contracting, where he led the company's US government programs and distribution strategy. In 2019, he was promoted to lead Amgen's value and access team, during which time he testified before the US House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, in a hearing on lowering prescription drug prices.

Prior to his time at Amgen, Niksefat worked as a senior consultant specializing in large biopharmaceuticals and biotechnology companies. He spent time at several professional service firms, most recently at IQVIA after it acquired the life sciences consultancy he founded – Marina Consulting – in 2012.

Niksefat holds a bachelor's degree in public policy and a master's degree in accounting from the University of Southern California and is a certified public accountant.

**Mikaela Odlander**

Director of Digital Therapeutics
Orexo

Mikaela Odlander is the director of digital therapeutics at Orexo, a company developing improved pharmaceutical products and digital therapies for unmet need in mental illness and addiction disorders – areas which have become increasingly prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdowns.

Orexo's digital therapies aim to prevent, manage or treat medical disorders and diseases. Therapies are available 24/7 for patients in their own homes and their efficacy has been demonstrated in clinical trials. The technology is based on established cognitive-behavioral therapy techniques with the aim of change patterns of thinking or behavior that are behind patients' difficulties. Two therapies are already approved in the US, deprexis for depression and vorvida for alcohol misuse – with a further therapy targeting opioid addiction awaiting approval.

Prior to joining Orexo, Odlander spent over four years with GlaxoSmithKline in various technical roles, including as the tech innovation business process partner with the EC3 innovation hub. Odlander obtained a master's degree in the management of technology from UCL in 2015.



Yossi Pollak
Co-Founder and CEO
Sight Diagnostics

The vehicle for changing the way blood testing is done is a compact platform designed for use in any clinical setting at the point of care.

That is the vision of Israeli start-up Sight Diagnostics co-founder and CEO Yossi Pollak, who aims to create diagnostic products driven by AI.

The company's first product, Parasight, has diagnosed malaria in some one million tests in 24 countries. Sight OLO, its blood analyzer, digitizes blood using two drops of a finger prick or venous sample.

This sample is then interpreted by proprietary algorithms, capturing 1,000 detailed images, creating a digital version of blood and rapidly providing lab-grade complete blood count test (CBC) results. The CBC is frequently used as a data point in determining whether an ailment is viral or bacterial.

Pollak co-founded Sight Diagnostics in 2010, having worked at automotive computer vision developer Mobileye.

His message is that Sight Diagnostics is driven by evidence and science. Extensive clinical trials at Boston Children's Hospital, Columbia University Medical Center and TriCore Labs helped the company gain US FDA 510(k) clearance for OLO.



Adar Poonawalla
CEO
Serum Institute of India

Adar Poonawalla is CEO of *Serum Institute of India Pvt. Ltd.*, an institution founded in 1966 by his father Cyrus Poonawalla. Serum Institute was the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by the number of doses produced as of 2017. Adar Poonawalla joined the group on 2001, after graduating from the University of Westminster in London. He took over as CEO in 2011.

Responsible for day-to-day operations of Serum Institute, during his time as CEO Poonawalla has overseen the acquisition of Bilthoven Biologicals, a Netherlands-based government vaccine manufacturing company; and launched Serum Institute's oral polio vaccine in 2014, which addressed a global shortage of polio vaccines at that time.

During the pandemic, under Poonawalla's leadership, Serum Institute undertook at-risk manufacture of the AstraZeneca/University of Oxford COVID-19 vaccine, Covishield. The group has faced a number of issues around the manufacture and delivery of the vaccine. A fire at its manufacturing unit in January 2021 was followed in February by South Africa's refusal to its use

Covishield due to lower efficacy against the emergent B.1.351 strain.

March saw a shortage of vaccine components sourced from the US as well as a temporary hold on exports of the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine, and in April Poonawalla revealed a legal notice from AstraZeneca over non-delivery of promised Covishield supplies. The company also had to refund South Africa for a previously placed order.

Still, Poonawalla has led the company through these numerous setbacks as well as during a pandemic that sees the constant shifting of goalposts. Serum Institute has supplied millions of doses of Covishield to countries around the world, including low- and medium-income countries under COVAX. As of April 2021, Serum Institute had delivered over 70% of the nearly 38 million doses of the AZ vaccine given to over a hundred countries under the COVAX scheme. (Also see "[Will AZ Legal Notice, Clotting Incidents Cloud Serum's Fortunes?](#)" - Scrip, 13 Apr, 2021.)

Besides this, Serum Institute has two other SARS-CoV-2 vaccines under development.

In memory of his mother, Poonawalla also founded the Viloo Poonawalla Foundation, a charity focused on education, health care, green spaces, and water and environment sanitation.



Annette Säfholm
CEO
Gedeo Biotech

Annette Säfholm joined Gedeo Biotech in 2016 as a business development and project manager, before taking the CEO position just eight months later. The company is developing a non-antibiotic therapy that both prevents and treats bacterial vaginosis, an issue which affects many women at some point in their lives. Gedeo's candidate, pHypH, has a PH-lowering effect and showed 82% effectiveness after one week of treatment in the latest study, with no serious or unexpected adverse events.

Gedea Biotech was set up by a multidisciplinary team from Lund University, Sweden, where Säfholm obtained a PhD in breast cancer metastasis between 2003 and 2007. Säfholm also has an executive MBA and a master's degree in medicinal biology.

Prior to her time at Gedea, Säfholm already had extensive project management and business development experience from her time as a publisher in medicine with Studentlitteratur for over six years. She is also a co-founder of WntResearch, an oncology research company focusing on the development of anti-metastatic therapies.

Säfholm's specific scientific focuses are in oncology, hematology and immunology.



Khushboo Sharma

VP, Science and Regulatory Affairs

BIO

Khushboo Sharma is vice president, science and regulatory affairs at Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO), the industry trade organization. She joined BIO in April after spending 11 years in various roles at the US FDA.

Previously, Sharma was deputy director of operations, Office of New Drugs (OND), a division of the FDA comprising eight review offices with 27 review divisions. As deputy director, she oversaw business operations and supported regulatory review. She also oversaw resource planning capacity for staffing at the OND.

Sharma first joined the FDA in 2010, as a regulatory health project manager and co-leader of the Chemistry Manufacturing Controls review team, part of the Office of Pharmaceutical Quality. From there, she moved to the OND, first as senior regulatory health project manager, before quickly moving up the ranks to OND acting associate director for regulatory affairs, team lead, chief of staff, and then deputy director.

During her time at FDA, Sharma worked closely with leadership at FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) on IT infrastructure and business processes. "Working at the FDA was the highlight of my career; but after 11 years, I wanted a new challenge," said Sharma. "I wanted to expand my scientific and regulatory horizon from the industry and private sector perspective, and this current opportunity with BIO check-marked everything I wanted to accomplish as the next challenge in my career."

Prior to joining the FDA, Sharma worked as a scientist for four years at Janssen Pharmaceuticals, where she managed oncology and therapeutic monoclonal antibody drug products, supporting development in Phase I/II and Phase III clinical studies. She earned a master's degree in business administration in health care and biotechnology industry management from Pennsylvania State University.



Alvine Tremoulet

Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lead
Pfizer

Alvine Tremoulet is global diversity, equity and inclusion lead at *Pfizer Inc.*, and is based in Paris, France. Tremoulet joined Pfizer 14 years ago as a communications internee, and was successively promoted to communications roles of greater responsibility, before becoming inclusion lead, Europe, in 2016.

In her role as inclusion lead, Europe, Tremoulet worked closely with Pfizer's worldwide diversity and inclusion team, human resources and regional business leaders to develop, implement and manage diversity strategies, including the development of diversity and inclusion metrics. She also designed educational programs for the company, such as unconscious bias training, inclusive cultural programs, and mentoring and development initiatives.

In 2020, Tremoulet became Pfizer's global diversity, equity and inclusion lead, at a time when social justice and equity issues dominated headlines, in the wake of George Floyd's death at the

hands of police officers in the US.

A certified diversity practitioner, Tremoulet is an avid and active public speaker on diversity and inclusion issues. She is also an active member of the Healthcare Businesswomen's Association (HBA), which she first joined in 2009. She is now president of HBA's Paris Chapter, where she is involved with HBA's Gender Parity Collaborative, an industry consortium working to systemically advance equity and parity in the healthcare industry.

Tremoulet was born and raised in the Republic of Cameroon, and is a believer in the concept of corporate activism in alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. She is a graduate of EFAP - Ecole Française des Attachés de Presse.

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“I consider myself a corporate activist. As an employee, when you're entering a workplace, you are not leaving yourself outside of the door.”

- Alvine Tremoulet



James Weatherall

VP, Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, R&D
AstraZeneca

James Weatherall, VP, data science and artificial intelligence, R&D at [*AstraZeneca PLC*](#), is focused on transforming the process for drug discovery and development, using data science and advanced analytics.

Weatherall joined AstraZeneca in 2007 as a clinical research scientist, informatics, and became the company's global discipline lead for bioinformatics two years later. Since then, he has taken on greater roles in advanced analytics, leading the company's Advanced Analytics Centre before building and leading a new R&D function in his current role.

As leader of the data science and AI, R&D group, Weatherall oversees roughly 150 data and AI practitioners. The group's activities span the full research and development process, from disease research and drug discovery to translational science and clinical development.

Weatherall earned a PhD in high energy particle physics at the University of Manchester, where he is now an honorary reader in computer science. Weatherall began his career as an academic researcher, and then became a scientific software engineer consultant for the life sciences and other industries, prior to joining AstraZeneca.

A member of the Council of the Royal Statistical Society, Weatherall has published variously on topics including data visualization, cryptography, text mining, machine learning and health data science.

In 2021, Weatherall was ranked by DataIQ as number four among the top 100 most influential data and analytics practitioners.



Lars Christian Wilde

Co-Founder, President and Chief Business Officer
COMPASS Pathways

Lars Christian Wilde is president and co-founder of COMPASS Pathways, a company focused on accelerating patient access to evidence-based innovation in mental health.

The NASDAQ-listed company is developing psilocybin therapy for treatment-resistant depression. Its synthetic psilocybin, COMP360, has been designated a Breakthrough Therapy by the US FDA. In 2021, COMPASS is running a Phase IIb clinical trial in 22 sites across 10 countries in Europe and North America. Topline data is expected from the Phase IIb study toward the end of 2021.

Wilde himself suffered with treatment-resistant depression and anxiety some years ago and has personally experienced the frustration of being unable to find an effective medication or treatment option. After finding relief with psilocybin, he joined COMPASS co-founders to build a company that could bring this and other therapies to the millions of people who face mental health challenges.

An active entrepreneur, Wilde was previously CEO of Springlane, a leading European direct-to-consumer kitchen and BBQ brand and the largest German cooking magazine. He has also worked as an investor at Waterland Private Equity, one of the world's best performing private equity funds.



Klaas Zuideveld
CEO
Versameb

Klaas Zuideveld is the CEO of Versameb, a company focused on discovering and developing RNA-based drugs for the modulation of protein expression and cellular targeting.

VERSagile, Versameb's technology platform, is also capable of simultaneously influencing multiple therapeutic targets with a single molecular construct. The Basel, Switzerland-based biotech's lead candidate is targeting stress urinary incontinence (SUI) by accelerating tissue regeneration in the urinary sphincter. Between 4-35% of adult women suffer from SUI globally, and there is currently no treatment that restores long-term function.

Versameb hopes to use its technology to treat a wide array of muscular disorders. The biotech also has an oncology pipeline, with disclosed targets including head and neck cancer and renal cancer.

Zuideveld has a PhD in pharmacology and mathematics from Leiden University in the Netherlands, as well as a master's degree in biopharmaceutical sciences. Prior to joining Versameb, he spent four years as vice president of pharma partnerships at Caris Life Sciences, and 12 years at Roche, where among his various roles he was the clinical team leader for Avastin (bevacizumab).

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