Movers & Shakers in BioBusiness 2020
Connecting for Strength

Thanks to our Partners
Foreword

Kate Bingham,
Managing Partner, SV Health Investors
Trustee, the Francis Crick Institute
Chair, UK Vaccine Task Force

“Our community is significantly shaping the trajectory of the pandemic.”

The UK life sciences industry has risen to the challenges posed by COVID-19 with exceptional innovation and collaboration across industry, clinicians, the NHS, academia and government.

Applying technology and scientific knowledge to developing and testing treatments, vaccines and diagnostics at breakneck speed, our community is at the forefront of global scientific research and clinical trials, significantly shaping the trajectory of the pandemic.

The Movers and Shakers in BioBusiness profiled within this report are outstanding examples of women who are similarly changing the face and future of healthcare. Each has contributed immensely to the UK’s world-class science, retaining talent, driving economic growth and improving patient care. Their successes will inspire our next generation of scientists and encourage the growth of a more diverse talent pool.

The Francis Crick Institute is proud to host the BioBeat20 Summit: Accelerating data-driven health, connecting researchers, entrepreneurs and investors together to move forward adoption and investment in this key area.

Now is the time to build upon the momentum, connections and learnings that have come from this pandemic and apply them to all diseases, so that we can make a real difference to global health in the future.

Congratulations to this year’s Movers and Shakers and I am excited to follow the career journeys of these women over the coming years.
We need resourceful leaders for these challenging times. Here in these pages you’ll find 30 shining examples in the form of our Movers and Shakers for 2020, along with Alumni from previous years.

It is the strength in our human connections that enables entrepreneurs and researchers to bring ideas to life. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought out the very best of British science, highlighting the resilience of the sector and our capacity for collaboration and innovation.

We’ve seen innovative solutions for tackling COVID-19 and other life-threatening conditions, novel opportunities appearing at the intersection of data science and biology, and new business models emerging from the constraints of the current situation.

We have profiled hundreds of leaders in UK life sciences since the first Movers and Shakers in Biobusiness report was launched in 2014. I am delighted that so many have returned in our Alumni section, creating a powerful network that we can all draw on as we forge a way forward together.

Congratulations to all the leaders profiled in this year’s report, and heartfelt thanks to the nominators and expert reviewers who provide their time and insights to make this such a valuable resource.

The BioBeat community is a rich resource we can all draw on, now and in the future – thank you for being part of it.

Miranda Weston-Smith, Founder, BioBeat
**Acknowledgements**

**The Reviewers**
I am deeply grateful to the Reviewers of this year’s report and all their support over the years. Many thanks to:

- Dr Barbara Domayne-Hayman
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- Dr Philip Jordan
  Partner, Innovations, Wellcome
- Dr Howard Marriage
  Entrepreneur in Residence, University of Edinburgh, Honorary Fellow, Francis Crick Institute, Owner, Biotech Innovation & Future Health
- Dr Christine Martin
  Deputy Head of Seed Funds, Cambridge Enterprise

- Dr Andy Richards OBE
  Serial Biotechnology Entrepreneur and Investor
- Dr Iwan Roberts
  CEO, Innovation Forum
- Professor Heather Wallace
  University of Aberdeen

**Advisors, nominators, supporters**
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- Elizabeth Roper, Epidarex Capital
- Pauline Stasiak, LifeArc
- Chris Torrance, PhoreMost
- Agnieszka Wabik, Women Ahead of Their Time
- Julia Wilson, Wellcome Genome Campus
- Karolina Zapadka, Babraham Research Campus
Developing revolutionary healthcare products

**Olivia Cavlan, Head of Business & Operations and Co-founder, Alchemab Therapeutics**

Putting function first to identify novel therapeutics

Olivia has built Alchemab from its inception, working up the company’s ideas and securing £6 million syndicated seed investment. She has brought together clinical insights, deep sequencing and next-generation analytics to identify naturally-occurring protective antibodies. In just seven months, the team has already identified several promising leads and made a major contribution to the development of antibody treatments for COVID-19.

**Bakul Gupta, CEO and Co-founder, ImmTune Therapies**

*In vivo* engineering of immune cells for CAR-T therapy

Since co-founding ImmTune in 2019, Bakul has raised pre-seed funding from angel investors. She is designing and synthesising a non-viral vector platform with the potential to genetically re-engineer a patient’s T-cells inside their body. This technology will deliver a more potent, faster and cheaper CAR-T treatment, and is currently being tested pre-clinically.

**Gita Khalili Moghaddam, Borysiewicz Biomedical Sciences Fellow, University of Cambridge**

Precision marking of brain tumours

Gita is developing AI algorithms to improve the delineation of brain tumour margins during surgery in real-time, aiming to improve survival by reducing local recurrence. The software in the device visualises the patient-specific boundary between cancerous and normal brain cells based on their biological disparities. A prototype version of the software will be tested in randomised controlled clinical trials in 2021.

**Amy Li, Head of Research and Innovation, PetMedix**

Antibody engineering for animal health

Amy uses human antibody structure and biology to guide the understanding of canine and feline therapeutic antibodies. Focusing on regions that contribute to efficacy, stability, half-life and suitability for drug development, Amy and her team engineer these regions to create drug candidates tailored to biological targets. PetMedix raised £10 million in 2019 and are now testing these engineered variant antibodies in biochemical and cellular assays.

**Hannah Sore, Founder and CEO, PharmEnable**

Using AI to find medicines inspired by nature

Hannah leads an AI drug discovery company mapping unexplored areas of chemical space to develop nature-inspired new molecular shapes. PharmEnable is designing and testing these novel small molecules against previously undruggable targets across cancer, inflammation and neurology. During the 2020 UK lockdown, Hannah raised £1.8 million investment and assembled an international remote-based team of experts to join her.

**Gosia Trynka, Director of Experimental Sciences, Open Targets, Wellcome Sanger Institute**

Using large-scale genomics to understand disease

Gosia and her team are combining immunology, large-scale human genomic data and computational modelling to understand how genetic variation impacts the immune system and causes disease. She is using single cell transcriptomics in hundreds of thousands of cells to uncover genetic variants that alter T-cell activation. The insights from this work are helping to prioritise drug targets for treating complex immune disorders.
**Lavanya Bhamidipati, Investment Associate, InHealth Ventures**

Leveraging data to reduce investment biases

Lavanya has developed data-driven analytical models to reduce unconscious bias in the investment process. Her models use algorithms to analyse multiple levers that can identify strong founders and potential areas in need of disruption. She co-led the due diligence for two investments in 2020: Imvaria (developing novel digital biomarkers for rare and critical diseases) and Suki (a voice-activated digital assistant for clinicians).

**Mary Canning, Principal, Epidarex Capital**

Investing off the beaten track

Mary helps to build biotech companies in places with excellent research but lacking local lead investors willing to take a risk. She identifies technologies, leads diligence and executes investments, and works with founding teams to develop their business. Examples include LUNAC Therapeutics, a Leeds spinout developing next-generation anti-coagulant drugs, and Mironid, a Glasgow company developing a first-in-class therapy for a rare kidney disease.

**Isabel Fox, Managing Partner, Luminous Ventures**

Closing the investment gap between technology and biology

As an investor and wellness coach, Isabel brings the EQ to IQ. She funds innovative companies at the intersection of technology and life sciences, backing deep tech businesses transforming human health. She is an early investor in lab automation specialists Synthace and has invested in 14 companies over the last five years, including Hadean, Ellipsis, BioBeats, Optellum and Oxford VR.

**Magdalena Jonikas, Partner, Syncona**

Scaling up ambitions for UK drug discovery start-ups

Magda helps drug discovery companies aim for the long term while still at their earliest stages. She works with companies to build clinical, regulatory and commercial plans that will enable them to take their products through to launch. She led the £14 million Series A and £27.5 million expansion financings for University of Oxford spin-out OMass Therapeutics, as well as the £32 million Series B round for Cambridge-based Azeria Therapeutics.

**Heather Roxborough, Partner, Optum Ventures’ Global Fund**

Creating value from disruptive technology

Heather partners with extraordinary entrepreneurs, working together to fundamentally change healthcare. Many health tech start-ups struggle to drive adoption of their disruptive innovation - Heather works with them to overcome this barrier and achieve their goals. Through Optum Ventures, she provides the market intelligence and investment needed to help companies develop a winning value proposition, access new markets and scale in the US.

**Erica Whittaker, VP, Head of UCB Ventures, UCB**

Bold visions for biotech company creation

As a seed investor, Erica funded a spin-out from the University of Sheffield to develop cell therapy for hearing loss and a Harvard start-up working on immunologically silent gene therapy. She also secured rapid investment for a Belgium-based biotech developing COVID-19 antibody treatments. Driven by the belief that diverse teams fuel innovation, the Executive Management and Boards of her investments are a rich mix of gender, ethnicity and nationality.
Charli Batley, Senior Operations Director, PhoreMost
Re-defining the gold standard for operations
Charli pioneered the 100% safe return of staff on site during the COVID-19 lockdown, including antigen screening and obligatory masks, leading to the resumption of full productivity from August 2020. Staff-led from the beginning and spearheaded by consistent senior team presence, PhoreMost’s pandemic operations manual has been shared widely to help other companies achieve the same outcome.

Hannah Murfet, Senior Compliance Manager, Microsoft Research Lab, Cambridge
Translating health data regulations for machine learning
Working in collaboration with several of Microsoft’s research teams, Hannah has led the development of agile pathways for health compliance. Her work supports projects ranging from medical imaging to the adaptive immune response and includes development of processes for health data and medical device compliance. She is an Honorary Fellow at the PHG Foundation and co-authored a report on Algorithms as Medical Devices.

Jane Osbourn OBE, CSO, Alchemab Therapeutics and Chair, Mogrify
Rapid assessment of COVID-19 antibody therapies
Jane realised the need for a co-ordinated approach to assessing the effectiveness of neutralising antibody therapies against SARS-CoV-2. She convened a coalition of over a dozen UK biotech, CRO, clinical and academic partners to assess antibody therapeutics, sponsored by the BIA. Within four months, 650 antibodies had been evaluated. 40 were then tested in combination, with clinical testing of one or two final combinations due in 2021.

Shree Patel, SVP Clinical Operations, Achilles Therapeutics
Supplying clonal neoantigen T-cell products to patients
In the last 12 months, Shree has established a supply chain for Achilles’ novel neoantigen-based T-cell therapy for solid tumours in the UK. By working with leading UK hospitals to collect patient material for manufacturing T-cells and for delivery of the final products, Shree enabled the treatment of Achilles’ first melanoma and lung cancer patients in the summer of 2020.

Sally Price, Head of Cell and Translational Science, Medicines Discovery Catapult
Mobilising a scientific army for COVID-19 testing
Sally led the sourcing and training of nearly 400 scientists to deliver mass testing for COVID-19 at the Alderley Park Lighthouse Lab. The speed of the project has been incredible, taking just four weeks from design to first results. She has implemented strategies to rapidly train staff to handle virus-containing samples at high throughput, whilst delivering the highest quality patient data.

Helen Young, Senior Scientist – Advanced Therapeutics, Centre for Process Innovation
Accelerating commercialisation of gene therapies
Collaborating with emerging gene therapy companies, Helen works on overcoming the bottleneck of developing commercially viable manufacturing processes for their products. She is leading the scale-up of adeno-associated virus production, one of the most commonly used viral vectors for gene therapies, using miniaturised bioreactor systems to enable high-throughput screening of different conditions for virus production in suspension cell cultures.
Patient Impact

Transforming patient access to healthcare

**Janet Downie, CEO, RoslinCT**
Faster, safer stem cells for regenerative medicine

Janet and her team are implementing an RNA-based reprogramming method for the manufacture of induced pluripotent stem cells. Developed in conjunction with REPROCELL Europe, this GMP-compliant process will be available in 2021. The cells can be used in autologous cell therapies, for clinical trials and adopted to develop allogeneic cell therapies, building a bridge between the two approaches.

**Tamsin Holland Brown, Paediatrician, Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust, Founder, Hear Glue Ear**
Affordable devices for glue ear

Tamsin developed the free Hear Glue Ear app for children with hearing loss, providing access to speech therapy, home hearing assessments, listening games and information for families. The app has become a popular UK-wide solution during COVID-19, recommended by national bodies and ‘highly commended’ by NICE.

**Lucy Jung, CEO and Co-founder, Charco Neurotech**
Self-treatment technology for Parkinson’s disease

Lucy has designed a wearable for people with Parkinson's disease that uses vibration to reduce their symptoms. CUE1 provides medication alerts, tracks disease progression, and delivers an average movement improvement three times the clinically significant threshold. Lucy created the device in consultation with patients, and has been prototype testing since December 2019. The team has secured £785K in pre-seed funding.

**Elena Mustatea, CEO and Co-founder, Bold Health**
Digital therapy for the management of digestive conditions

30% of people have disabling gastro-intestinal conditions, including Elena herself. She created the software for the first Cognitive Behavioural Therapy therapeutic for Irritable Bowel Syndrome in 2019, and this year devised the first app for children suffering from digestive disorders. She and her co-founder have raised £1.4 million, helping thousands of patients around the world.

**Shardi Nahavandi, CEO and Founder, Pexxi**
Data-driven personalised female healthcare

Pexxi focuses on the effects of female hormones on mental and physical health. Shardi and her co-founder are using technology to accelerate a new type of personalised healthcare for women. They have designed an algorithm that matches women with the optimal personalised solution based on their medical history, hormone levels, and genetic profile, which recently received a CE mark.

**Rayna Patel, CEO and Founder, Vine Health**
Empowering cancer patients through digital support

Rayna is driving personalised patient support to allow people living with cancer to feel in control of their care. The Vinehealth platform combines AI and behavioural science to gather real-time patient-reported data through integration with smartphones and wearables, learning with every patient. Rayna has formed multiple partnerships with Novartis, The Royal Marsden, NHSX and more, and raised £1.3 million for the company.
Emmanuelle Astoul, Head of Licensing, Transine Therapeutics
Sharing best practice to translate genomics into healthcare

Recognising that limited skills and knowledge hinder the speed at which genomic science is translated into innovative medicine, Emmanuelle designed a training programme focused on commercialising genomics. The programme ranges from ethical use of data to regulatory and reimbursement strategies. Over 100 participants have been equipped with practical skills to go on and develop genomic technologies for precision medicine.

Melissa Konopko, Programme & Partner Manager, Wellcome Sanger Institute
Bringing global voices to genomic data standards

Melissa leads the diversity initiative for the development of standards for sharing health data. Consulting experts from 20 countries, she’s diversifying leadership and teams while uncovering barriers to inclusion. Her work addresses the spectrum of cultural needs and ensures that standards do not exacerbate existing inequalities, laying the groundwork for a future of global, equitable precision healthcare.

Jeanette Kusel, Director of Scientific Advice, NICE
Improving data quality for better healthcare decisions

Jeanette is leading early dialogue between industry and health technology assessment bodies to create faster decisions and quicker patient access to cost-effective new medicines. She has driven new advice services for developers of digital health technologies, initiating 20 projects in a single year, and is leading a multi-agency advice service for AI health technologies.

Nicole Mathon, Associate Director, Opportunity Assessment Group, LifeArc
Promoting informed decision making in the COVID era

Nicole leads a team that has delivered crucial analysis underpinning the clinical repurposing of existing drugs for COVID-19. Their assessment of more than 100 drugs and pathways has been used by the Government’s Therapeutic Task Force and the University of Edinburgh’s STOPCOVID platform to prioritise therapeutics for immediate testing. Her work has also been central to the funding of 15 priority clinical trials for LifeArc’s £10 million COVID-19 repurposing funding call.

Rebecca Myers, Head of Education, Entrepreneurship Centre, Cambridge Judge Business School
Educating the next generation of scientific innovators

Rebecca designed the EnterpriseTECH and EnterpriseTECH STAR talent-development and early-stage commercialisation pipelines to help scientists transform inventions into business opportunities. More than 140 PhD and postdoctoral researchers have already come through the programmes, which equip participants to increase their capacity for generating ideas and build the skills to make them happen.

Claire Wallace, VP Life Sciences Solutions Group EMEA, Thermo Fisher Scientific
Making COVID-19 the only competitor

By mobilising her team to collaborate across academia, industry partners and government, Claire played a critical role in the UK’s COVID-19 response. She supported implementation of the wider UK testing network and setting up the centralized Lighthouse Labs. This was part of a continued effort to provide employees and resources to ensure that the COVID-19 testing goal could be reached.
Over the past six years we have profiled hundreds of leaders in the UK life sciences sector, creating a vibrant and strong network for the journey ahead. We are delighted to welcome back so many of our alumni and encourage you to reach out and connect with them to share skills and knowledge as we build the future of biobusiness together.

**Science & Technology**

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Medical charities, biotech companies
BioBeat19 Summit

Accelerating cell and gene therapy

Scientists, innovators, entrepreneurs and investors gathered at the Stevenage R&D Campus to explore the impact of cell and gene therapy. Taking a collaborative holistic approach, the summit highlighted increasing manufacturing and clinical trials capability, closeness to the patient and environmental awareness as key areas of focus. GSK and Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst were joint hosts of the meeting.

"If together we can create the right environment for cell and gene therapies, and other emerging technologies, then there is no doubt that the UK could continue to lead on bench to bedside delivery, to many more patients in need."

Emma Walmsley, CEO, GSK

Photos courtesy of Stephen Bond.
We are delighted to sponsor BioBeat20 and celebrate the achievements of female life sciences innovators. Appleyard Lees is committed to supporting women, and other under-represented groups, in the STEM professions. With over 50 patent and trademark attorneys and litigators, Appleyard Lees is a leading intellectual property law firm. Who we are, and what we do – but also how we do it – makes us distinctive. We offer broad sector, industry and commercial knowledge, enabling us to respond to client requirements in an efficient, agile way.

At AstraZeneca, we are driven by science, united by science, and every day, we push the boundaries of science to deliver life-changing medicines. We know that however innovative our science, however effective our medicines and delivery, to achieve all we want to achieve, we cannot do it alone. We create open research environments, for example through our Open Innovation programme, where scientists both inside and outside of AstraZeneca can share their ideas and collaborate to drive innovation and impact new health advances. This is why we are proud to support and sponsor BioBeat in encouraging new start-ups and entrepreneurs.

Covington is pleased to continue its support of BioBeat and to sponsor BioBeat20.

As a law firm with one of the world’s largest and most comprehensive life sciences industry-focused practices, and a proven commitment to diversity, Covington supports BioBeat’s recognition of the women who help make the UK’s life sciences sector such a vibrant industry.

One Nucleus is a not-for-profit life sciences membership organisation and proud partner of BioBeat20. We support Europe’s largest life science cluster encompassing the London-Cambridge-East of England region via knowledge transfer, connectivity, inward investment and growth.

This year’s Movers and Shakers report is a wonderful celebration of inspiring female leaders in the UK life sciences sector. The Francis Crick Institute is a biomedical discovery institute formed in April 2015 dedicated to understanding the fundamental biology underlying health and disease, and translating discoveries into new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat illnesses. In October 2019, the Crick received a Bronze Athena SWAN Award and is committed to attracting and creating opportunities for talented women and researchers and nurturing their careers.

The BioBeat Movers and Shakers report is a celebration of individuals dedicated to changing science, entrepreneurship and business. The goals of BioBeat strongly align with those of the Innovation Forum which are to empower and connect industry leaders, entrepreneurs, academics and investors to further strengthen the life sciences sector. As a network and an accelerator for early-stage companies, the Innovation Forum is a strong advocate of celebrating female role models to advance diversity within the healthcare industry.