

# Q&A SESSION WITH LOUI MADAKAMUTIL



LOUI MADAKAMUTIL, Senior Vice President, Head of Discovery and Preclinical Development, Nektar Therapeutics

Loui Madakamutil is SVP and Head of Biology and Preclinical development at Nektar Therapeutics. In this role, Loui is responsible for the discovery strategy of Nektar to deliver novel immuno-modulatory medicines in several therapeutic areas. Previously Loui was a Senior Director at J&J. Loui held appointment as the Site Head of Immunology at Takeda Pharmaceuticals in San Diego. Loui also spent five years in Immunology discovery at Celgene. He has taken several large and small molecule compounds into clinic. Loui did his Post-Doctoral training at the La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology and has a PhD from University of Mumbai India.

## **In your opinion, what is the most exciting news coming out of the immuno-oncology marketplace in the last 12 months?**

There is a lot of excitement in combination therapy approaches in IO market place. Targeting the non-overlapping immune cells that promote cancer is a theme that is showing benefits in the clinic. Essentially targeting the yin and yang of immune system in the tumor micro environment.

Another emerging theme is to target the stroma of the tumor as stromal cells seem to induce resistance to both conventional chemotherapy and immunotherapy agents

## **What are the most important steps to ensure a therapy goes successfully through preclinical development?**

There is a high rate of attrition for projects to transition from preclinical to clinical proof of concept stage in humans. Besides the obvious aspects of robustness of asset generation, the target or the axis of biology being evaluated needs clinical or human disease relevance. This is usually the biggest challenge for novel projects. Therefore drug discovery teams play safe and try to make BiC assets on already clinically validated MOAs.

## **You are presenting a talk on Cytokine Therapies, what are the main challenges you encounter when developing this type of therapy?**

Nektar has reinvented the way to utilize cytokines for therapeutic benefit. As cytokine treatments have been employed in the clinic for a long time our goal is to utilize our technology to harness the cytokines for even better utilization.

There are several challenges we encounter during the development process. Creating a robust and simple therapeutic is a key challenge. As many of the cytokines need to be made in GMP quantities for testing and commercialization several previous programs have faced this challenge. Defining the asset generation strategy and establishing what are the design goals is a specific challenge for Nektar. Developing the right therapeutic rationale and setting up a clear clinical strategy to proof of concept is a big one as well.

Loui Madakamutil will be speaking at our 2nd Annual Advances In Immuno-Oncology USA Congress, 8th - 9th October 2019, San Diego, USA