

## Where is biotech going next?

Ever since I got involved with this industry, I have been fascinated by the “quantum leaps” in science that have considerably changed medical practice and patients’ lives.

When I first joined big pharma in early 2000, there was much excitement about the opportunity of obesity drugs and still quite some scepticism about monoclonal antibodies. What a rollercoaster it has been! Obesity disappointed and monoclonal antibodies for cancer and auto immune disease became some of the best-selling drugs. Now many antibodies have gone biosimilar and obesity excitement is at a high and rising.

## What are the next big opportunities in pharma and medical innovation?

Here is my take of some of the bigger opportunities:

- Alzheimer’s and other neurological diseases (e.g. Parkinson’s) still need a real breakthrough
- After the covid vaccines, RNA therapies have only just begun to deliver and have a lot more to go
- Gene and cell therapies will get their momentum back once they solve safety and manufacturing issues. It is hard to imagine how else we will be able to treat or even cure some genetic diseases
- In oncology, antibody drug conjugates already are the next generation of antibodies and still have more to go. Keep an eye on radiopharmaceuticals too
- Ophthalmology indications such as glaucoma and dry AMD are still in need of their quantum leap
- More rare disease treatments will emerge and once again their potential will surprise on the upside
- Discovery platforms, AI, digital tools are all interesting and important “enablers”, but may still struggle to attract interest on their own (i.e. without an asset providing validation)

**Rare diseases** are a good example of where biotechs have been able to create value on their own. Quite often big pharma does not see the potential of rare disease until it is realized on the market. Genzyme, Alexion, Actelion went “fully integrated” and later benefited from interesting acquisition premia after big pharma got interested. Vertex, Biomarin and argenx have managed to stay fully integrated and independent companies with significant valuations.

**In most other areas**, biotechs have played and will continue playing a key role in innovation too. But it is harder to go it alone due to the high costs and risk of failure. So, they operate through the “early-stage value duo” model: biotechs and venture funds. The duo works together until clinical proof of concept and, once they achieve that, most of time biotechs partner with bigger companies or go public.

My vision for Basel Biotech Consulting is to **enable biotech companies turn their idea into a medicine by supporting them in strategy, financing and partnering aspects.**

If you’d like to explore ways of collaborating, please reach out: [luis@baselbiotechconsulting.com](mailto:luis@baselbiotechconsulting.com)