CAREER FEATURE

First-quarter biotech job picture

A quarterly snapshot of job expansions, reductions and availability in the biotech and pharma sectors.

AstraZeneca is set to expand its presence in China by spearheading the creation of a new life sciences park in Wuxi, just west of Shanghai. The UK-based pharma joins Sweden's BioVentureHub, the Skolkovo Foundation of Russia and the UK BioIndustry Association as founding partners of the International Life Science Innovation Park, which will be built by the Wuxi city government. The park will support AstraZeneca's R&D efforts at its current China Commercial Innovation Center and provide multinational companies with laboratory space, equipment and support, as well as links to local universities and hospitals.

Three years after it paid almost \$6 billion for Bay Area biotech Stemcentrx, a string of setbacks has AbbVie trying to stem its losses. The company has laid off 178 Stemcentrx employees after a halted phase 3 trial for Rova-T (rovalpituzumab tesirine) in December forced it to take a \$4 billion write-off. In 2016, Stemcentrx had 240 employees.

Other companies that announced layoffs in the first quarter include Five Prime Therapeutics, which cut 41 (20%) from its research, pathology and manufacturing divisions; Aduro Biotech, which will reduce headcount by 37% after deprioritizing several programs, including its personalized live-attenuated, double-deleted *Listeria monocytogenes* (pLADD) immunotherapy, in order to extend its cash into 2022; Singapore-based Aslan Pharmaceuticals, which said in January that it will reduce its headcount by 30% and cut operating expenses by 50%; and, finally, Compugen, which will eliminate 35 positions, primarily from R&D. The company said the cuts will extend its cash runway through mid-2020 and allow an expansion study of COM701, a monoclonal antibody targeting poliovirus receptor-related immunoglobulin domain that is in phase 1 testing for solid tumors.

Advertised biotechnology and pharmaceutical sector jobs in the job databases tracked by *Nature Biotechnology* were slightly down in the first quarter of 2019 (Tables 1 and 2) compared with the previous quarter (*Nat. Biotechnol.* 37, 194, 2019). □

Table 1 | Who's hiring? Advertised openings at the 25 largest biotech companies

Company ^a	Number of employees	Number of advertised openings ^b		
		Monster	LinkedIn	Biospace
Shire	23,044	4	649	0
Amgen	20,800	444	709	601
Monsanto	20,500	316	10	0
Gilead Sciences	10,000	14	269	1
bioMérieux	9,971	0	16	0
Biocon	9,234	0	0	0
IDEXX Laboratories	7,600	0	167	0
Celgene	7,467	100	328	8
Biogen	7,300	0	253	0
Regeneron Pharmaceuticals	6,200	5	486	422
Illumina	6,200	47	183	0
Novozymes	6,109	0	1	0
Opko Health	6,030	5	5	0
Endo Pharmaceuticals	3,039	55	47	0
BGI Genomics	2,585	0	0	0
BioMarin Pharmaceutical	2,581	0	184	10
Alexion Pharmaceuticals	2,525	165	178	0
Biotest	2,474	0	136	0
Myriad Genetics	2,400	131	162	0
Vertex Pharmaceuticals	2,300	186	195	7
Evotec	2,178	0	9	0
Alkermes	2,000	140	187	0
GenScript Biotech	1,932	0	6	0
CK Life Sciences	1,688	0	0	0
Amphastar Pharmaceuticals	1,644	0	0	0
Total		1,612	4,180	1,479

^aAs defined in *Nature Biotechnology's* survey of public companies (36, 576–584, 2018). ^bAs searched on Monster.com, LinkedIn.com and Biospace.com, 2 April 2019. Jobs may overlap.

Table 2 | Advertised job openings at the ten largest pharma companies

Company ^a	Number of employees	Number of advertised openings ^b		
		Monster	LinkedIn	Biospace
Johnson & Johnson	134,000	6,474	792	0
Novartis	125,000	8	324	3
Sanofi	106,600	38	469	0
Bayer	99,900	18	208	0
Abbott Laboratories	99,000	1	855	0
GlaxoSmithKline	98,500	1	353	0
Roche	93,700	4	1,013	0
Pfizer	90,200	724	214	0
Merck & Co.	69,000	17	318	0
Sinopharm	61,700	0	0	0
Total		7,285	4,546	3

^aData obtained from Statista. ^bAs searched on Monster.com, LinkedIn.com and Biospace.com, 2 April 2019. Jobs may overlap.

Michael Francisco

Senior Editor, *Nature Biotechnology*

Published online: 3 May 2019
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41587-019-0120-4>