

## Another must-have oncolytic virus asset for big pharma



[Jacob Plieth](#)

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Boehringer Ingelheim struck a deal with the oncolytic virus company Viratherapeutics in 2016, and it has clearly seen something extraordinary in the intervening two years. Otherwise it would be difficult to understand why it would today shell out €210m (\$245m) to exercise an option to buy out Viratherapeutics without having seen a scrap of clinical data. It is clear that big pharma sees oncolytic viruses as an increasingly important part of the anticancer combination armoury. The previous deal, in February, saw Merck & Co pay a 184% premium to take out Viralytics for \$394m, though unlike Viratherapeutics this company had a phase II asset ([Merck & Co makes biggest oncolytic virus bet since Amgen in 2011, February 21, 2018](#)). True, Amgen's 2011 buyout of the Imlygic originator Biovex for \$424m is a long way from being declared a masterstroke, but the potential of oncolytic viruses in immuno-oncology combinations is now increasingly being talked about – specifically in terms of turning “cold” tumours “hot” – and indeed Boehringer says this dual approach is central to its cancer immunology research strategy. Expect increased interest in other oncolytic virus companies, such as Targovax, Transgene and Oncolytics.

## Selected oncolytic virus deals

Date	Source	Buyer	Deal type	Up-front	Note
Sep 2018	Viratherapeutics	Boehringer Ingelheim	Acquisition	\$245m	VSV-GP project, preclinical
Feb 2018	Viralytics	Merck & Co	Acquisition	\$394m	Cavatak, phase II asset
Nov 2017	Oncolytics	Adlai Norte	Licensing	\$5m	Far East development of Reolysin
Oct 2017	Turnstone Biologics	Abbvie	Licensing	Undisclosed	Ad-MG1-MAGEA3, phase I/II asset
Dec 2016	Ignite Immunotherapy	Pfizer	Acquisition	Undisclosed	50% stake
Dec 2016	Psioxus	Bristol-Myers Squibb	Licensing	Undisclosed	NG-348, preclinical asset
Dec 2016	Takara Bio	Otsuka	Licensing	Undisclosed	Japan rights to HF10
Nov 2016	Virttu Biologics	Sorrento	Acquisition	\$25m (equity)	Seprehvir, phase II asset
Jun 2016	Psioxus	Bristol-Myers Squibb	Licensing	\$10m	Enadenotucirev, phase I collaboration
Jun 2015	Oncos	Targovax	Acquisition	Undisclosed	Structured as a 50/50 merger
Jan 2015	Omnis	Astrazeneca	Licensing	Undisclosed	VSV project, phase II
Nov 2013	Jennerex	Sillajen	Acquisition	Undisclosed	\$150m biodollar value
Jan 2011	Biovex	Amgen	Acquisition	\$424m	Imlygic, approved for melanoma in 2015

Source: company statements.

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