

Have Glaxo and Sanofi been snubbed by Project Warp Speed?



Amy Brown

Inovio investors were rattled this week by reports that the company was no longer in consideration for the White House’s “Project Warp Speed”. Executives at Glaxosmithkline and Sanofi were probably feeling the burn of rejection more keenly. The US government-backed programme is seeking a Covid-19 vaccine to accelerate with cash and expertise; [according to the New York Times](#) five candidates remain in the running, with the finalist due to be selected soon. Inovio is a tiny player whereas Sanofi and Glaxo are [two of the world’s biggest vaccine makers](#). Glaxo in particular must be smarting: Warp Speed’s chief adviser is Moncef Slaoui, who worked at the UK pharma giant for decades, and for a time led its vaccine arm. True, neither of the two companies’ candidates, one of which is being developed jointly, has yet reached the clinic, but then nor has any from Merck, which only entered the game [last month](#). The combined scale of these apparently snubbed operators makes their efforts hard to overlook, particularly when newcomer Moderna made the cut; Mr Slaoui has also served as a board member here. With [Bloomberg now reporting](#) that another two unnamed companies are in fact on the shortlist, perhaps a wrong has been hurriedly righted.

Travelling at warp speed? The five Covid-19 vaccine players shortlisted, and other clinical candidates

Company/collaborators	Vaccine	Type	Detail
Reported as selected for Project Warp Speed			
Uni of Oxford/ Astrazeneca	AZD1222 (COV001)	Chimp adenovirus vaccine	Data from 1,100-patient trial expected imminently
Moderna/NIAID/Cepi	mRNA-1273	mRNA vaccine	Small amount of phase I data released; phase II trial recruiting
Biontech/Pfizer	BNT162	mRNA vaccine	First cohorts dosed in phase I/II trial
Johnson & Johnson	No product code	Adenovirus type 26 vaccine	Phase I to start Sep 2020
Merck/Themis	No product code	Measles virus vector vaccine	Clinical studies to start later this year
Other clinical stage projects, not on the list			
Inovio	INO-4800	DNA vaccine	Enrolment in phase I trial complete, results expected Jun; phase II/III planned in summer
Cansino/Academy of Military Medical Sciences	Ad5-nCoV	Adenovirus type 5 vaccine	China study under way
Shenzhen Genoimmune	LV-SMENP-DC	Synthetic minigene vaccine	Clinical trial started Mar 2020
Sinovac	CoronaVac	Inactivated SARS- CoV-2 vaccine	Phase I trial recruiting in China

Source: EvaluatePharma & company statements.

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