Evaluate Vantage

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Roche keeps its eyes on the prize with second faricimab win

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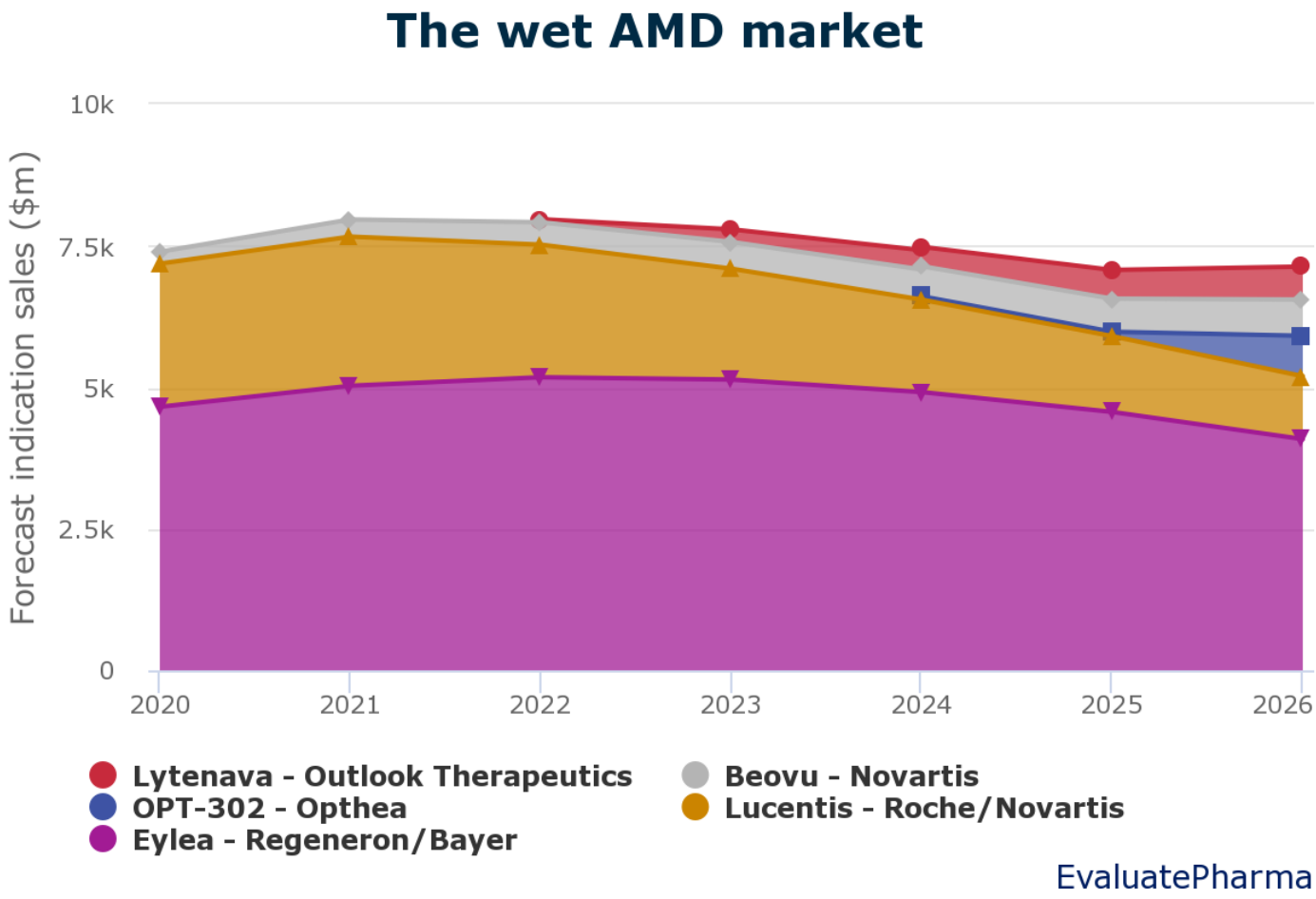
Roche's bispecific antibody faricimab has already posted positive topline pivotal results in diabetic macular oedema. Now the project can add wet age-related macular degeneration to the list, today showing non-inferiority to Eylea in the Tenaya and Lucerne studies. Faricimab's main selling point is its potential for less frequent dosing, as far apart as up to 16 weeks; details of how this schedule performed against Eylea will be key to gauging the Roche project's market potential. In the trials faricimab was given every eight, 12 or 16 weeks, depending on patients' disease activity, versus Eylea every eight weeks. All Roche has said for now is that, overall, faricimab was non-inferior to Eylea on average change in best-corrected visual acuity over 48 weeks. Roche added that 45% of patients receiving faricimab were on the 16-week schedule during the first year. Investors will not have to wait too long for the details: data from Tenaya and Lucerne, as well as the Yosemite and Rhine trials in oedema, will be presented at the Angiogenesis, Exudation and Degeneration meeting on February 12-13. But Roche might not have long before biosimilar competition kicks in: Eylea loses US patent protection in 2023.



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