Romandie medtech and biotech shine in Venture Kick finale
New advances in heart failure & tissue reconstruction therapies

Venture Kick’s latest winners of CHF 130,000 are two Romandie startups bringing innovative medical therapies to the table – one tackles the outside from the inside, the other goes to the heart of the problem. Both projects show again the high potential of Switzerland in the Biotech sector.

According to recent WHO reports, heart failure is one of the biggest killers in the world, with one in five people developing heart failure with deadly consequences. To solve this growing issue, HAYA Therapeutics has chosen to attack the problem head-on, addressing the heart failure process directly. The startup, spun out of the Experimental Cardiology unit at the CHUV, discovered a new way to target a heart-specific long noncoding RNA (ribonucleic acid), known as Wisper, that is a heart specific regulator of cardiac fibrosis. RNA – an essential molecule assembled as a chain of nucleotides, much like DNA – transfers genetic code and can directly interfere in organ malfunctions. Using its extensive knowhow and first-in-class approach, HAYA Therapeutics developed a pharmaceutical solution capable of blocking myocardial fibrosis and treating heart failure, potentially saving millions of lives.

Volumina Medical, an EPFL spin-off, develops a cutting-edge regenerative technology for soft tissues. Following a tumor ablation, a trauma or for aesthetic purposes, many patients need to regain their physical integrity and appearance. Existing solutions do not enable to create new durable volumes and often require extensive surgery or repeated treatments. The areas most concerned are the face and the breasts. To reduce risks and offer a minimally invasive solution, Volumina Medical has developed an injectable scaffold capable of regenerating volumes of soft tissues. The scaffold, injected through thin cannulas, supports vascularized growth and helps rebuild the natural shape of the affected soft tissues, enabling a natural look and feel without surgery.

“The Venture Kick process and funds received have been fundamental in developing our business case for translating this breakthrough science from the laboratory bench to the hospital bed potentially providing hope for millions of heart failure patients worldwide.” said HAYA Therapeutics CEO and co-founder Samir Ounzain.

Volumina collaborates actively with practicing physicians and key opinion leaders and will be using the funds from Venture Kick to further develop its groundbreaking product. Amélie Béduer, CEO and co-founder of Volumina, explained: "Venture Kick provides a solid support both through the investment and through a very pertinent concrete personalized advice. In addition, it opens the doors to an incredible network of top level entrepreneurs and investors."

HAYA Therapeutics (CHUV)
Spun out of the Experimental Cardiology unit at the CHUV, HAYA Therapeutics is dedicated to treating heart failure through the discovery and development of innovative targeted first-in-class RNA-based therapeutics, with a specific focus on long noncoding RNAs. The startup is based at the StartLab Incubator (Biopôle) in Épalinges, Lausanne.
www.hayatx.com

Volumina Medical (EPFL)
The EPFL spin-off develops dynamic biomaterials for plastic and reconstructive surgery. Volumina Medical aims at designing and commercializing implantable medical devices, most notably with its main product, an injectable 3D scaffold capable of reconstructing volumes of soft tissues. The startup is based in Lausanne.
www.volumina-medical.ch
About Venture Kick

The philanthropic initiative Venture Kick provides up to CHF 130,000 to seed stage startups. In addition, it offers a well-structured entrepreneurial path towards building a winning business. Startups present in front of a jury at three different stages to obtain funding as well as direct feedback and access to an international network of successful entrepreneurs and investors.

Since 2007, 530 Swiss startup projects have received CHF 21.66 million from Venture Kick. This has resulted in more than 414 incorporated companies creating 4,748 jobs. Startup companies supported by Venture Kick have attracted CHF 1.808 billion from investors so far, and 55 startups from Venture Kick have made it into the TOP 100 Swiss Startups 2017.

In 2018, Venture Kick will pay out CHF 3.2 million to idea-stage startup projects to bring Swiss science to global markets. More information in the Venture Kick annual report.

The Venture Kick Foundation is supported by Gebert Rüf Stiftung, Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Fondation Lombard Odier, Debiopharm Group, Fondation Pro Techno, Rising Tide Foundation, European Space Agency, Engagement Migros, Swisscom, André Hoffmann, Hansjörg Wyss, Martin Haefner and Igor Fisch.

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