

IMMREVIEW

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ANTOINE PAPIERNIK,

Managing Partner & Chairman of Sofinnova

IMMR at the crossroads
Of VC Companies and
Life sciences R&D teams

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innovative research

Antoine was selected by Forbes for its “Midas List” of the world’s top venture capital investors. He has a proven track record investing in companies that have gone on to be publicly listed on international exchanges or been acquired by leading players in the LifeSciences sector:

He has worked with IMMR for 20 years on several preclinical research projects: Corevalve, Pixium Vision, Recor, Fovea, Gecko, SafeHeal, Corwave, to name a few!

Antoine, as an active and well-connected investor, you are taking up the challenge of investing in unique Life Sciences opportunities, and you are very successful! What is your secret?

At Sofinnova Partners, we are working on developing successful businesses with the potential to significantly improve standard of care. We strive to invest in promising start-ups who address large unmet clinical needs.

There are of course several factors that contribute to transforming a promising opportunity into a medical breakthrough, but focusing on the preclinical R&D stage is key in order to validate and orient the next crucial steps of a medical innovation development, and a high-end expert in the field is definitely needed to face strategic early issues.

What are the required features of a preclinical lab that could answer these startups strategic issues?

Quality and outcomes are most important for medical innovation preclinical development, and start-ups should no doubt consider a very experienced preclinical lab, offering well-trained hands to ensure efficiency and a successful bridge from the preclinical to the clinical phase. Indeed, a novel medical device needs to be evaluated, fine-tuned and validated in a relevant animal model to prove its efficacy and eligibility to the Human phase.

But unexpected events are often encountered in early research projects, and preclinical studies must be conducted with expertise, rigor, flexibility and immaculate attention to detail.

“WE STRIVE TO INVEST IN PROMISING START-UPS WHO ADDRESS LARGE UNMET CLINICAL NEEDS.”

Antoine, what is your recommendation to start-ups for a good preclinical lab?

Since risks must be calculated and managed, start-ups need a highly efficient, truly GLP-compliant and full-service preclinical lab that accelerates their innovative research with high success rates, reducing time to market and costs with studies that are carefully planned, expertly conducted to the highest ethical standards and professionally documented.

Moreover, an independent and impartial lab, with no IP claims, and no equity positions in the start-ups is essential to remain very objective in order to orient the design and turn a scientific breakthrough idea into significant new advances in healthcare. And confidentiality procedures must remain very strict!

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