

Wall Street Reporter

Interview With Floyd Bloom, M.D.

Chairman & Chief Executive Officer of Neurome, Inc.

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WSR: Good Day From Wall Street. Today our guest is Dr. Floyd Bloom, Chairman and CEO of Neurome, Incorporated. Neurome is a privately held company and headquartered in California. Good afternoon, Dr. Bloom, and welcome to Wall Street Reporter.

Bloom: *Thank you. Glad to be with you.*

WSR: Thank you for joining us today. For our audiences, why don't we start with a brief history and overview of Neurome, Inc?

Bloom: *Neurome was founded in October 2000 as a company designed to bring modern technologies to the study of gene expression in the brain. We were financed privately and have, since the second week of our operation, had a revenue-producing collaborative agreement with Elan Pharmaceutical, which continues through to this day. The initial technologies have been developed and applied to mouse models of Alzheimer's disease as a means to focus on the source of the pathology and to help Elan design better ways to intervene in the pathological process.*

WSR: Dr. Bloom, what is so unique about your technologies that differentiate you, set you apart from the competition?

Bloom: *Well, In fact, there is no other company that we know of that is designed to do what we do, which is to determine where in mouse brains specific genes causing or genes associated with disease are expressed, and to do so in a quantitative manner, such that we can use our findings as screens for the potency of new medications to intervene in the disease process. We do this with three-dimensional images of the mouse brain, so as to be able to put the information we collect into the context of what we have come to know about the functions of the brain and its several subsystems of operation, like the motor system, the sensory system, the blood pressure regulating system, the appetite regulating system, the sleep and attention regulating systems, and we can now define where genes are expressed and can compare their expression patterns across strains of mice. As you know, as your listeners will know, transgenic mice expressing genes that cause or are associated with human brain diseases are one of the modern technologies of being able to bring genomics into modern medical care, and we believe we are at a key position in that pathway of findings, discoveries and implementations.*

WSR: Can you briefly talk about some of your intellectual property portfolio?

Bloom: *We have designed very high throughput methods to be able to take brains and very consistently analyze the sites of gene expression in a manner that is faster, more accurate and more precise than anything that has been available to date. We have developed proprietary software systems to complete the analysis, to automate the process, to collect the data, store the data and bring it to our investigators' desktops when they are ready to analyze for specific questions.*

WSR: Let's talk about the collaboration partnerships, if you can name some of them for our audiences, and the underlying situation behind them.

Bloom: *Well, the original collaborative arrangement was with Elan Pharmaceutical. That is still ongoing. We are using our technologies to analyze their mouse model of Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease was described by Professor Alzheimer about 100 years ago. While we know what it looks like in the brains of people who die with the disease, what the mouse model allows us to do is to intervene at various times in the life cycle of the mouse and determine what the initial changes in that brain are. Until now, almost everyone in this line of research has focused on what the brain looks like at the end of life. With our proprietary Neurome technologies, we have been able to report--and these data were published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in January, and the second report in April--our data show that the changes in those mouse brains exist long before the prototypic changes that were found by Professor Alzheimer called 'plaques' in the brain. Plaques of an amorphous protein called amyloid protein. We find that the brains are already disturbed in the circuits where the amyloid will eventually deposit by 90 days of age. Ninety days of age in a mouse's brain would be about 18 to 20 years of age in a human being. So, long before the degenerative changes occur, there are already detectable and very specific changes that occur in those parts of the brain that ultimately will be affected by the disease-causing brain. We believe this changes the time at which to focus on interventions from late in age to much earlier in age. We are working with them now to try to define means to test these hypotheses.*

WSR: What about the management team? Who are the key people behind the company?

Bloom: *I was initially the founding CEO of the company and I was on sabbatical from my regular job at the Scripps Research Institute during that first 18-month period. Currently, the president is our Chief Technical Officer, Dr. Warren G. Young, who has been a colleague of mine for more than 20 years, developing software to apply to neuroscience problems. Our third founder was Dr. John Morrison, who is a Professor of Geriatrics at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York City.*

WSR: Neurome is a privately held company. What are some of the future plans for financing to grow this company further?

Bloom: *We are about to open our second round of financing. We feel confident now that the technologies are in place to be able to pursue additional collaborations and we have just announced a collaboration with a local company in La Jolla called La Jolla Pharmaceutical. They are interested in a disease called systemic lupus erythematosus, which largely affects the joints and the kidneys but is also known to cause very severe mental, emotional and memory problems in people with that disease. Together we are going to look at the possibility that we can identify some of the molecular bases for those central nervous system findings and see whether they can extend to the brain, for the therapeutic interventions that they have already proposed for the kidneys and the joints. We are also in early stages of discussion with two major pharmaceutical companies about using our technologies for central nervous system disorders that appeal to them, ranging from neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis through to depression and possibly even pain.*

WSR: Dr. Bloom, why is Neurome a good investment opportunity for our potential investors?

Bloom: *The Central Nervous System is really the last remaining place in which health problems are really not being dealt with accurately or adequately. Millions of people have depression and schizophrenia. As the population ages, many more will have Alzheimer's disease and the possibility of problems with Parkinson's disease and strokes and those are all brain disorders for which we have no good treatments at the moment. In order to profit from the information that is coming from the genome projects, we need ways to rapidly move from genes that are disease-associated to understanding how those genes and their gene products can cause those diseases. We believe that the Neurome technologies represent the currently 'best effective way' of characterizing the function of these disease-associated genes and determining how to go about screening for drugs that can intervene in their disease-causing processes.*

WSR: Dr. Bloom, for our audiences who will like to find out more information about the company, what would be the best contact way?

Bloom: *They can email me at fbloom@neurome.com or go to our web site www.neurome.com.*

WSR: A pleasure to have you with Wall Street Reporter. Thank you for joining us today.

Bloom: *My Pleasure.*

WSR: Our guest has been Dr. Floyd Bloom, Chairman and CEO of Neurome. Inc. Thanks for joining us and have a great day.