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In Vivo's 2023 Rising Leaders: Healthcare Innovators At The Top Of Their Game

30 Rising Leaders Across The Biopharma, Medtech And Health Technology Sectors

by Lucie Ellis-Taitt

The fourth annual listing of *In Vivo*'s 'Rising Leaders' includes entrepreneurs and innovators from across the world who represent the next wave of creativity in healthcare.

Included for 2023 are investors, CEOs of small and mid-sized companies, rising employees in larger biopharma and medtech businesses, as well as people driving unique health initiatives worldwide.

Rising Leaders Home

Age is not a criterion for inclusion – or exclusion. The 30 people below have been recognized for bringing something new to the game. The list focuses on achievements, talent, creativity and strong leadership qualities.

Look out for other features in the *Rising Leaders* series, including exclusive interviews with innovators and disruptors, alongside insights from established industry executives on leading top companies in the 2020s.

In Vivo's 2023 Rising Leaders are listed in alphabetical order.

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ery Jessica *Supernode* Cedric *Anellis* Jennifer*Portfolia* Denise *Office of* Jeb *Nimbus* Jesper *Hei* Dave





Haig Aghajanian

Co-Founder and Head of Research
Capstan Therapeutics

As well as being head of research at Capstan Therapeutics, Haig Aghajanian is adjunct assistant professor of medicine at the Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania.

Capstan Therapeutics is advancing precision *in vivo* cell engineering to develop therapeutics for a broad range of disease categories with unmet clinical need. The core technology comprises targeted Lipid Nanoparticles (tLNPs) to enable engineering or ablation of pathogenic cells in the body.

In September 2022, Capstan raised $102m in a series A financing round led by Pfizer Ventures and joined by Leaps by Bayer, Eli Lilly, Bristol Myers Squibb, Polaris Partners, Alexandria Venture Investments and existing investors. This followed a November 2021 $63m seed financing led by Novartis Venture Fund and OrbiMed, joined by RA Capital and Vida Ventures.

Aghajanian's research has focused on the etiology of cardiac disease and cell therapy for the treatment of fibrosis, with recent work published in the *Nature* and *Science* journals.

He holds a PhD in cell and molecular biology from University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and a BSc degree in biology from Villanova University.

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Jared Baeten

VP of Clinical Development and HIV Franchise Head
Gilead Sciences

Jared Baeten joined Gilead in October 2020 as head of the company's HIV franchise. He has conducted extensive research for over two decades on HIV globally, including clinical trials, large-scale epidemiologic studies and behavioral and implementation science research. He led the Partners PrEP Study, which supported the approval of Gilead's Truvada as the first medication for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention in 2012 and a second trial that led to the first global approval of the dapivirine vaginal ring as a topical microbicide for HIV prevention in women. In 2022, he oversaw the team that received approval of Sunlenca, the first HIV capsid inhibitor and first medication for HIV dosed once every six months.

Prior to joining Gilead Sciences, Baeten was director of the University of Washington/Fred Hutch Center for AIDS Research, co-principal investigator of the NIH-funded Microbicides Trials Network, and tenured professor of global health, medicine and epidemiology at the University of Washington, where he was the vice dean for strategy and faculty affairs at the School of Public Health. He has published over 500 scientific articles on HIV and is dedicated to the growth of next-generation researchers around the world.

Gilead is a leader in the development of *antiretroviral therapy for HIV*. The company has developed 11 commercially available HIV medications.

Baeten holds a medical degree and PhD in epidemiology from the University of Washington, and a BA in

Pheast Therapeutics is developing novel checkpoint therap
The company was founded in 2020 as a spinout from Stanf
The company is initially focused on breast and ovarian can

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From Rallybio CEO Martin Mackay.

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Ashleigh Batchen

Head of Regulatory Affairs
British In Vitro Diagnostics Association, BIVDA

Ashleigh Batchen joined the British In Vitro Diagnostics Association (BIVDA) in October 2021 after almost five years working with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Her transfer from public to private sector came at a time when regulation of diagnostics and devices was and remains on the cusp of far-reaching change in both the UK and EU.

Ashleigh joined the MHRA as a medical device specialist and left it having risen to regulatory affairs manager – the role she assumed on moving to BIVDA.

A matter of months into her time at BIVDA she was promoted to head of regulatory affairs, helping the association's members adjust to the challenges of compliance with the forthcoming UKCA system and the requirements facing the UK market and issuing advice and insight on the EU's In Vitro Diagnostics Regulation.

It could hardly be a busier time for a regulatory affairs professional, given the UK-based diagnostic industry's need for advocacy from BIVDA and, from the authorities, market certainty. Ashleigh has immersed herself into this melting pot and has rapidly won plaudits for her insight and abilities in diagnostics regulation, and her interest in the general regulatory landscape.

Jesse Chen

Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer
Triana Biomedicines

Triana Biomedicines came out of stealth mode in April 2022 with $110m in series A funding. The company is building a “molecular glue” discovery platform to regulate disease targets that are difficult to address with other modalities. Triana’s platform aims to generate products that stabilize pre-existing or create de novo interactions between two proteins and alter the fate or functionality of the disease target. Molecular glues may allow for the pursuit of highly disease-relevant targets long considered undruggable or inadequately addressed by traditional drug discovery approaches.

Its drug discovery engine is powered by high-resolution structural insights, state-of-the-art AI and computational tools and bespoke chemical libraries.

Chen has more than a decade of discovery research and management experience, from early discovery through preclinical development. He joined RA Capital Management in 2019 as an entrepreneur-in-residence and co-founded both Triana Biomedicines and Avilar Therapeutics.

Prior to joining RA Capital, Chen was senior director of discovery at Kymera Therapeutics, responsible for building the company’s targeted protein degradation platform and pipeline. He also previously held roles at Moderna Therapeutics and Millennium Pharmaceuticals, responsible for developing novel platforms and leading discovery programs.

Chen holds a PhD in biological chemistry from the

Anthony DeBoer is head of business development at Synaff DeBoer’s deal-making activities at Synaffix have resulted i In 2023 already, DeBoer has led the company’s $2bn licens

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Lisa Deschamps

CEO

AviadoBio

In college, Lisa Deschamps intended to get into the fashion business, however she took a job as a sales rep at Novartis – working her way up the ladder at the big pharma.

Deschamps is now CEO and an executive board member of AviadoBIO, a London, UK-based private gene therapy company. Prior to joining AviadoBIO, she was senior vice president and chief business officer of Novartis Gene Therapies and was previously head of Novartis' global neuroscience franchise.

She holds an MBA in general management from NYU Stern School of Business and a BBA in marketing from IONA College, Hagan School of Business. Deschamps serves as a non-executive director for Verona Pharma and sits on the strategic advisory board and serves as a non-executive director for Reset Pharma.

Founded in 2019 on the back of research collaboration between King's College London and the UK Dementia Research Institute, AviadoBIO is building a pipeline of investigational gene therapies for neurodegenerative diseases. Its lead preclinical candidate is AVB-101 for GRN frontotemporal dementia (FTD-GRN).

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Cécile Dupont

Principal
Sofinnova

Cécile Dupont joined Sofinnova Partners in 2019 as principal and program director for its MD Start Strategy. She is also CEO of HEPTA Medical, developing a unique minimally invasive non-surgical treatment modality for early lung cancer.

Dupont also brings her operational and strategic expertise to Endoron Medical to accelerate the development of its technology.

She was previously chief operating officer of Gradient Denervation Technologies, and director of clinical, regulatory and market access at SafeHeal, the first company created by MD Start II, where she managed the execution of its first-in-human study and regulatory approvals in the EU and US.

Prior to joining MD Start, Dupont held various clinical, marketing and regulatory positions in both mature and start-up medical device organizations in the fields of endoscopy, pulmonology, dermatology, surgery and diabetes care; for single and multi-use disposable products and capital equipment.

She holds degree in biomedical engineering from Université de Technologies de Compiègne in France and a degree in corporate finance from HEC in Paris.

Alexandra Ekman Ryding

CEO

Atrogi

Atrogi AB, an early-stage Swedish pharma company, is developing a potential first-in-class drug with a unique mechanism for the oral treatment of type 2 diabetes. CEO Alexandra Ekman Ryding joined the company in 2018. She holds a PhD in medical epidemiology and has experience in venture capital and corporate broking.

In January 2023, the company announced that the first patient had been enrolled in a Phase Ia/b study of drug candidate, ATR-258.

The drug is based on research by Professor Tore Bengtsson at Stockholm University. It uses adrenergic signalling to selectively stimulate b2-adrenergic receptors to promote glucose uptake in skeletal muscle resulting in a reduction of blood glucose levels, achieved independently of insulin. Atrogi believes ATR-258 has potential as a treatment for type 2 diabetes, normalizing glucose homeostasis as well as combating common comorbidities and restoring normal physiological functions.

Atrogi is using its findings in diabetes to also pursue treatments for other metabolic disorders, such as obesity.

Christoffer Ekström

CEO and Founder
AI Medical Technology

AI Medical Technology is a company operating in the interdisciplinary fields of data science, software development and medicine. Having raised initial funding in 2021, the company is focussed on bringing its first solution, Dermalyser, through clinical trials and into the market.

Dermalyser is a diagnostic decision support system using advanced artificial intelligence. The primary function is to classify skin cancer, such as malignant melanoma, using image analysis combined with deep learning. The tool is developed and trained based on quality-controlled dermatoscopic images of patients' skin lesions together with associated patient data. Medical professionals, for example general practitioners, can use Dermalyser on a mobile phone together with a dermatoscope mounted in front of the mobile phone camera. The GP takes a picture of the patient's skin lesion and receives a melanoma risk label within a few seconds, and with higher diagnostic precision and speed than traditional and alternative methods.

CEO Christoffer Ekström is one of the founders of AI Medical Technology and also a board member. He is a serial entrepreneur and holds a MSc in immersive technologies from Stockholm University and is finalising a BBA in business administration at Uppsala University.

David Fajgenbaum

Co-Founder
Every Cure

David Fajgenbaum is an immunologist and co-founder of Every Cure, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to unlock the full potential of approved medicines to treat every disease possible. The organization, which he launched at the Clinton Global Initiative in 2022, employs AI to search through existing data to identify potential additional indications for approved medicines. The company has entered into several industry partnerships.

Fajgenbuam's interest in repurposing medicines was sparked after he was diagnosed with Castleman disease. After nearly succumbing to the disease several times, he identified an existing drug that could treat his illness. Fajgenbaum published a best-selling account of his experience called *Chasing My Cure: A Doctor's Race To Turn Hope Into Action*.

Fajgenbaum also runs the Center for Cytokine Storm Treatment and Laboratory at the University of Pennyslvania School of Medicine. He studies hyperinflammatory diseases such as Castleman disease and COVID-19, and identifies novel treatments for these illnesses. The 38-year-old is one of the youngest University of Pennsylvania faculty appointees.

Jessica Federer
Managing Partner
Supernode Ventures

Jessica Federer is managing partner at Supernode Ventures, where she invests in early-stage digital health companies with a focus on women's health.

Founded in 2018, Supernode's first fund was sector agnostic. With its second fund, the investment group is focused on getting in as early as possible in pre-seed, seed and series A financings for women's health and healthtech start-ups.

Federer was the first chief digital officer for German big pharma Bayer AG, as well as the first woman to hold that role across the biopharma industry. During her tenure, Federer united the company's global digital strategy and investments to accelerate growth. She also held leadership positions in regulatory affairs, market access, communications and public affairs during her almost 10 years with Bayer.

She was appointed a board member of Sage Therapeutics in March 2023. Sage has one product on the market for major depressive disorder and a pipeline of treatments addressing disorders of the brain, such as Parkinson's disease and Huntington's disease.

Federer has served on the United Nations International Telecommunications Union (UN-ITU) advisory board, as well as participated in engagements with the World Economic Forum, and is considered a thought leader in digital health. She began her public health career as an analyst at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in the US Department of Health and Human Services. She

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Cedric Francois

CEO

Apellis

Apellis Pharmaceuticals achieved a major milestone in 2023, with the US approval of Syfovre – the first treatment for geographic atrophy.

Geographic atrophy is a leading cause of age-related blindness, affecting around one million people in the US and five million worldwide. The condition is an advanced form of dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and distinct from wet AMD, where VEGF-based therapies like Regeneron/Bayer's Eylea (aflibercept) are multi-billion-dollar sellers, but these drugs cannot treat GA.

Over the years, many large and small biopharma companies have tried and failed to develop treatments, making approval of Syfovre (pegcetacoplan injection) a clinical breakthrough and a coup for the small biotech Waltham, MA-based biotech; Jefferies analysts are forecasting peak annual revenues of $3bn or more for the product in GA.

Cedric Francois has been CEO of Apellis since its founding; the company was spun out of Potentia Pharmaceuticals in 2009.

Francois holds a medical degree from the University of Leuven in Belgium and a PhD in physiology from the University of Louisville. Following postgraduate training in pediatric and transplant surgery, Francois joined the research team that performed the first successful hand transplantation in Louisville in 1999.

Jennifer Fried

Partner
Portfolia

"Building a healthcare company is like building any type of company – it always takes longer and it's harder than you thought."

Jennifer Fried started her career at the global management consulting firm Bain & Company after graduating from Northwestern College in 2010.

She left the firm in 2013 to pursue an MBA at the University of Chicago Booth School of Medicine to realize her dream of becoming a venture capitalist.

Whilst working at Hyde Park Angels, she first met head and neck surgeon Alexander Langerman, who was running a research laboratory at the University of Chicago and looking to develop a digital platform to help bring order and accountability to operating rooms. Fried started volunteering her time to learn about the challenges in the OR.

She was well under way in her VC career when she and Langerman co-founded Explorer Surgical in 2016. Fried led Explorer Surgical's software to commercialization and the company was acquired in October 2021 by Global Healthcare Exchange for an undisclosed amount.

Fried joined Portfolia in 2018 to help its founder and CEO, Trish Costello, build the VC's Femtech Fund. Portfolia's Femtech Fund diversifies across six to 10 early-stage companies in the emerging women's health and wellness space with investments from seed to pre-IPO. The company will be launching its third fund this year.

Denise Gavin

Director of Gene Therapy Branch 1
Office of Therapeutic Products, CBER

The Office of Therapeutic Products, formerly known as the Office of Tissues and Advanced Therapies, was officially reorganized and promoted to 'super office' status within the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research in February 2023. The OTP name change and super office promotion are intended to create flexibility and allow future growth within the office.

Denise Gavin was recently named permanent director of Gene Therapy Branch 1. She holds a PhD in microbiology and immunology from Rush Medical College.

Retiring OTP director Wilson Bryan said in February that the reorganization was an opportunity for younger leaders in the office, such as Denise Gavin, "*to develop and grow with the field*."

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Jeb Keiper

CEO

Nimbus Therapeutics

In December 2022, Nimbus Inc. completed one of the largest single-asset deals in the history of biotech, selling their TYK2 inhibitor program NDI-034858 for an upfront payment of $4bn and up to $2bn in additional milestone payments. Jeb Keiper has been CEO of Nimbus since 2018.

The Takeda deal was finalized after NDI-034858 significantly bested placebo according to topline results of a Phase IIb study of patients with moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis. In addition to the handsome upfront sum of $4bn, Nimbus could ultimately receive two $1bn payments if annual net sales reach $4bn and $5bn.

Nimbus was founded in 2009 with Atlas Venture, Schrödinger Inc and Bill Gates based on the idea that innovation occurs in the interfaces between humans and technology.

Keiper joined Nimbus in 2014 and initially served as chief business officer. He helped to set the strategic direction of the company. Between 2014 and 2018, Nimbus brought in over $775m of partnership and financing into the company, including a series B financing in March 2015, the sale of Nimbus' clinical NASH program to Gilead in May 2016 for $400m upfront, a strategic immunology alliance with Celgene announced in October 2017, and a round of private expansion capital in 2018.

Prior to Nimbus, Keiper was VP of business development at GSK Oncology and spent a decade at GSK in various leadership roles. Keiper led the oncology portion of the GSK-Novartis three-part business swap for $16bn announced in April 2014.

Jesper Kimer is CEO and co-founder of HEI Therapeutics, a Kimer has several advisory roles and investments in Creant