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## MERCK'S CANCER IMMUNOTHERAPY DRUG KEYTRUDA BOOSTS FIVE-YEAR SURVIVAL RATE FOR ADVANCED LUNG CANCER

About 23.2% of patients suffering from advanced lung cancer who received Merck's immunotherapy, Keytruda, as a first-line treatment survived after five years, according to a study released by the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO), [Reuters](#) reports.

This represents a massive gain over the historical five-year survival rate of merely 5% for those afflicted with the condition prior to the launch of cancer immunotherapy drugs like Keytruda. The equivalent figure for patients who took Keytruda after receiving other treatment jumped to 15.5%, the study adds.

The findings are likely to bolster Keytruda's status as the top-selling immuno-oncology medicine, with Refinitiv expecting Merck to generate revenues worth \$10bn this year and \$20bn in 2024 from the drug. In another boost for Merck, EvaluatePharma analysts have [forecast](#) the blockbuster cancer drug to emerge as the world's best-selling drug by 2024, with estimated proceeds of \$17bn.

## DASSAULT TO BUY MEDIDATA IN \$5.7 BILLION HEALTH DATA PUSH

The French makers of industrial design software, Dassault Systems SE, has bought the Medidata Solutions Inc. for \$5.7 billion, according to [Bloomberg](#). The American giant is a premier name in the healthcare industry, developing cloud-based software and analytical tools that support 'personalized healthcare.'

"Medidata offers clients wearable sensors that help track patient health and biomarker analysis to select which patients may best respond to certain drugs. It estimates that 13 of the top 15 medicines sold last year relied on its technology, as the healthcare industry shifts towards personalized medicine and the targeting of individual patient profiles."

Although shares of the French company fell, it has big hopes for the next year, judging by the investments it is making. "Shares in Dassault Systemes, which has a market value of 36 billion euros (\$41 billion) and annual sales of 3.5 billion euros last year, fell as much as 3% before recouping some of the decline to trade down 1% at 11:31 a.m. in Paris... The Medidata deal is expected to close in the final quarter of 2019 and start boosting earnings as early as 2020, the companies said in a statement."

## CHEMISTRY TEACHER-TURNED-BIOPHARMA ENTREPRENEUR SET TO BECOME BILLIONAIRE

Zhong Huijuan, a Chinese female entrepreneur who set up Hansoh Pharmaceutical 24 years ago after leaving her job as a chemistry teacher, is poised to take her firm public in Hong Kong at a market capitalization of \$10.4bn, [Bloomberg](#) reports.

Zhong, whose 68% stake in China's biggest psychotropic drug maker implies a \$7.9bn paper fortune as per the [Bloomberg Billionaires Index](#), oversaw an 18% year-on-year increase in Hansoh's profit for 2018, to 1.9bn yuan, as per the listing prospectus.

The 58-year-old follows in the footsteps of her husband, Sun Piaoyang who founded Shanghai-quoted Jiangsu [Hengrui Medicine](#) and currently owns a 25% stake, worth \$9.3bn, in the anticancer drugmaker.

Hansoh's flotation is expected to make Zhong and Sun one of world's richest biopharma families, with the couple tipped to overtake the Sacklers of Purdue Pharma.



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