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Industry Insights by Jeremy Levin, Chair and CEO of Ovid Therapeutics and Board Chair of BIO (AdvanSE Life Sciences Conference 2020)

by [Tina Williams McKeon](#)

On November 11, 2020, I had the pleasure of participating in a virtual fireside chat with Dr. Jeremy Levin at the first AdvanSE Life Sciences Conference held by the Southeast Life Sciences Association. Dr. Levin has a long and rich resume in the biopharma industry. For example, he played a pivotal role in the Bristol-Myers Squibb acquisition of Medarex and BMS's entry into the immunooncology field. Dr. Levin currently is leading Ovid Therapeutics, a biopharma company, through its phase three trials for treatment of Angelman syndrome, a rare neurological disease.

During our discussion, Dr. Levin provided candid insights as to the past, present, and future of the life sciences industry and BIO, where he current serves as the Board Chair. Dr. Levin reminded us that the innovations in the life sciences industry are strategic assets that must be valued. Biotechnology is relatively new but he has watched it grow into an industry that, in a moment of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, was able to rapidly develop and deploy vaccines, anti-viral treatments, and testing.

Dr. Levin noted the migration of biotech innovations from small companies that are more innovative to large companies that are more powerful. He predicts that, just as immunooncology exploded in the past, neuroscience will explode next and that, with each new biopharmaceutical agent for treatment of neurological diseases, we will learn more about the central nervous system. He discussed lessons the life sciences industry will take away from the COVID-19 pandemic – need for zero political influence at the FDA, CDC, and NIH; criticality of epidemiological research; means for rapid manufacture and distribution of biopharmaceuticals; and government/industry communication in a way that promotes trust.

Dr. Levin also addressed healthcare disparities as well as the need to embrace biosimilars with effective regulations and guidelines. Dr. Levin warned us that we sometimes must be prepared “to stick our necks out” for innovation to thrive. Each development creates another shoot that has the potential to flourish.

This summary cannot fully capture the inspiration and excitement Dr. Levin's remarks conveyed. The recorded program is available at <https://youtu.be/0U48BiSfBnE>.