

13 February 2013

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Conclusion of Joint Research Agreement with the Center for iPS Cell Research and Application, Kyoto University (CiRA)

Safety Assessment of Regenerative Treatment of Parkinson's Disease with iPS Cells

Shin Nippon Biomedical Laboratories, Ltd. (SNBL) today announces the conclusion of a three-year Joint Research Agreement with the Center for iPS Cell Research and Application, Kyoto University (CiRA) for the development and establishment of safety assessment methods for realization of brain cell transplantation in clinical setting using induced pluripotent stem cell (iPS cell)-derived neurons.

Professor Jun Takahashi of CiRA has been studying the application of iPS cell-derived dopamine neurons for the treatment of Parkinson's diseaseⁱⁱ, and it is expected that efficient and reliable methods of safety evaluation would facilitate clinical application of this technology. SNBL, with its preclinical studyⁱⁱⁱ experience and know-how, will seek to establish safety studies necessary for the clinical application of iPS cell technology.

Through his studies, Professor Jun Takahashi has succeeded in relieving Parkinson's disease symptoms with transplantation of human embryonic stem cell-derived dopamine neurons in a cynomolgus monkey model, as well as successful differentiation of human iPS cells into dopamine neurons and their transplantation into this monkey model. With these promising results, CiRA and SNBL will further conduct preclinical research leading to ensuring safety for humans. This research collaboration will provide opportunities for SNBL to train and cultivate valuable experts and specialists in safety assessment and evaluation in the field of cell therapy.

SNBL, with its extensive preclinical experience and achievements in safety assessment, has been providing Parkinson's disease modeling with monkeys since 2001 and is building research cooperation ties with Professor Jun Takahashi of CiRA. Going forward, SNBL is planning to proactively seek opportunities for collaboration with academia and the pharmaceutical industry to provide preclinical services in development of iPS cell therapy.

At the present time, the effect of this matter on the earnings of SNBL's current term is minimal.

Notes:

ⁱ Induced pluripotent stem cells are established by introducing a small number of genes into ordinary human somatic cells, and these cells can differentiate into various type of cell in the body and proliferate almost indefinitely in culture. iPS cells can be applied for etiological investigation of diseases, development of new drugs, and regenerative treatment such as transplantation.

ⁱⁱ Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder caused by loss of substantia nigra cells, resulting in subsequent reduction of dopamine production. Symptoms of the disease include tremor, slowness of movement and difficulty with walking and gait. Current treatments commonly involve supplementing the dopamine to alleviate symptoms. However, this sort of therapy is only proven effective while medication is being taken. The effects of other treatment such as surgery are also temporary, and at the present time, there is no fundamental remedy for Parkinson's disease.

ⁱⁱⁱ Preclinical studies are conducted to investigate efficacy or side effects of new drugs or remedies using cultured cells or experimental animals, in order to assure safety for subsequent clinical trials.