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Eisai is a Human Health Care Corporation striving for innovative solutions in prevention, cure and care for the health and well-being of people worldwide. We combine our talents to understand and meet the needs of patients and their families to enhance the quality of life.

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Eisai and DNAVEC Sign an Agreement on Drug Discovery Research for Vaccine Therapy for Alzheimer's Disease

Eisai Co., Ltd. (Headquarters: Tokyo, President and CEO: Haruo Naito) and DNAVEC Corporation (Headquarters: Tsukuba, Ibaraki, President and CEO: Mamoru Hasegawa) today signed an agreement on drug discovery research for vaccine therapy for Alzheimer's Disease (AD). In accordance with the agreement, Eisai will participate in the discovery research program of β -amyloid ($A\beta$) gene vaccine for AD using Sendai virus vector which DNAVEC owns and will obtain priority rights of development, manufacture and market for the outcome of the program.

DNAVEC is a venture company founded and grown on the basis of national project. The company specializes in the development of gene transfer vector technologies with a central focus on Sendai virus vector and the development of genetic therapies created through the application of such technologies. To date the company has confirmed that the $A\beta$ gene vaccine for AD eliminates $A\beta$ deposition in a study using a mouse AD model with $A\beta$ -deposition.

As an immune therapy for AD, a drug which is beneficial to inhibit the disease progression or to prevent disease development is being awaited. In addition to antibody therapy, vaccine therapy which can selectively induce anti- $A\beta$ antibody production is expected. By taking part in the discovery research program of DNAVEC, Eisai aims to develop a gene vaccine that can selectively induce anti- $A\beta$ antibody production through mucosal immunity.

Eisai is actively promoting not only in-house development but also collaboration with other companies to expand our product lineup in neurology, which is one of our franchise areas. Eisai has been making multidisciplinary approached towards the discovery of a causative gene, immune therapy and synthesis of low-molecular compounds in order to develop a next-generation AD medicine. Based on the agreement with DNAVEC this time, Eisai has obtained a new possibility of vaccine therapy for AD treatment. Eisai will continue our development to discover a new drug which can be beneficial to causal therapy for AD.

[Summary of DNAVEC and glossary are attached as a reference]

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Reference

1. About DनावेC Corporation

DनावेC Corporation is a full-fledged venture company originated from the results of the Japanese national project. During the nine-year national project, DनावेC Institute Corporation, the predecessor of DनावेC Corporation, has successfully developed innovative vectors including Sendai virus vector, which will become necessary for commercialization of gene therapy. The company has obtained a number of international patents on these vectors for their good efficacy and safety profile. They have also received high reputation from international academic conferences, clinicians, etc. Having such reputation, the company is promoting multiple joint research and development programs with many domestic and foreign research institutes and pharmaceutical companies in order to apply the vectors to various advanced biotech businesses including gene therapy and gene vaccine. Gene therapy research conducted by Kyushu University Hospital for severe ischemia in limbs using Sendai virus vector has obtained ministerial permission, and the first gene therapy by the use of such domestically-developed vector will be initiated soon.

2. Glossary

- Sendai virus

Sendai virus is one of pneumonia viruses of mice. The virus was named “Sendai” because it was found at Tohoku University in 1950’s. It has a cell fusion function by the two kinds of glycoproteins located in the virus envelope. No pathogenicity has been reported for this virus.

- Vector

It is what is called a “carrier of genes”. It is used to introduce a gene into a cell (target cell) that can express its genetic function. A vector based on virus that can be infected to animal cell are called “virus vector”. Virus vectors with high safety profile will be used when they are applied for humans by gene therapy, and further designed not to self-proliferate or develop secondary infection.

- β -amyloid

β -amyloid is a main constituent of senile plaque that is considered to be responsible for AD.

- Gene vaccine therapy

In this therapy, a gene to produce an antigen that will function to immunize is taken in the body using a vector, and antibodies against antigens will be produced by an immune reaction. Then the antibodies will attack antigens in the body to eliminate them. Recently, application of gene vaccine for chronic disease, as well as infection disease, is drawn attention.

- Mucosal immunity

Mucosal immunity is an immune mechanism located in mucosa. About 50% of immunocompetent cells of human are concentrated in mucosa.