

Fujifilm and Axcelead Drug Discovery Partners begin collaborating to advance drug discovery solutions using iPSCs

To enhance the Process of Research and Development of Drug Candidates

Tokyo/Kanagawa, July 10, 2019 —FUJIFILM Corporation (President: Kenji Sukeno; Fujifilm) and Axcelead Drug Discovery Partners Inc. (President: Yoshinori Ikeura; Axcelead) announced a collaboration to provide customers with a human induced pluripotent stem cell (iPSC)-based integrated platform for drug discovery solutions. By combining Fujifilm's iPSC-derived products that its U.S. subsidiary FUJIFILM Cellular Dynamics Inc. (FCDI) offers and Axcelead's compound evaluation and analytical services, the companies will work towards developing new drug efficacy evaluation methods and toxicity testing to meet specific needs of clients.

FCDI, located in Madison, Wisconsin, is a leader in the development, manufacture and application of human iPSC and iPSC-derived cells. Fujifilm has been offering its clients ranging from pharmaceutical and biotech companies to academia throughout the world, a selection of 15 kinds of iPSC-derived differentiated cells such as cardiomyocytes, hepatocytes and microglia cells* for life science research purpose supporting drug discovery. FCDI's expertise in stem cell technologies combined with Fujifilm's know-how in production process technology across a range of life science businesses ensures the delivery of consistent high-quality iPSCs, iPSC-derived cells and applications.

Axcelead is a comprehensive nonclinical drug discovery solution provider, and fully equipped to provide non-clinical customized services from exploratory research and optimization of candidate compounds to the process of bringing initiatives to clinical development for its customers. The company is unveiling unique services such as Integrated Drug Discovery service that undertakes drug discovery research in project units, and is working to expand its business operations.

Through the collaborations, Fujifilm and Axcelead aim to cater new approaches using iPSC to accelerate drug discovery of clients. For example, they will combine FCDI's iPSC-derived myocardial cells with Axcelead's service to evaluate and analyze drug candidate compounds, offering a broad range of services such as evaluation of potential cardiotoxicity. They will utilize both companies' technologies and expertise to develop evaluation methods and services that meet customers' specific needs, and contribute to acceleration of new drug development.

Fujifilm will consider further collaborations in the field of drug discovery support by combining the culture media and reagents owned by FUJIFILM Irvine Scientific, Inc., a leading company in the culture medium business, and FUJIFILM Wako Pure Chemical Corporation, a comprehensive reagent company.

By offering high value-added products and services that meet broad-ranging customer needs, Fujifilm and Axcelead will help customers create innovative new drugs.

Recently, in the R&D of new drugs, there is a growing need to evaluate the safety, efficacy, and pharmacokinetics of drug candidate compounds even more efficiently and with even greater precision, prior to starting clinical studies which entail huge costs. iPSC that possess infinite reproduction capabilities and the ability to differentiate into diverse cells, are attracting attention for use in R&D purpose. Because iPSC can recreate environments close to the human body by inducing target cells to differentiate, and the iPSC-derived differentiated cells are being utilized in evaluating drug candidate compounds in a growing number of cases. As more measures aimed at standardizing safety tests using iPSC-derived differentiated cells are being carried out, demand for iPSC is anticipated to expand even further.

*Immune cells that exist in the brain and the spinal cord. They have immune functions such as eating dead neural cells and amyloid-beta that has accumulated inside the brain, and promoting the regeneration of damaged nerve cells.

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