



BULLETIN



CANADIAN GENETIC DISEASES NETWORK

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CANADIAN GENETIC DISEASES NETWORK ENDORSES \$US20 MILLION RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA AND THE RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF JAPAN

The University of Ottawa and the Research Development Corporation of Japan (JRDC) have entered into a \$20-million (US) research agreement to study neuromuscular diseases, in particular Muscular Dystrophy and Huntington Disease. The agreement has been endorsed by the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, and the Medical Research Council, all of whom are partners in the research.

The five-year research venture, announced today in Ottawa, will be co-directed by Dr. Joh-E Ikeda of Tokhai University in Japan, and Dr. Robert Korneluk of the University of Ottawa. The project will be launched January 1 1996 and will focus on the study of dynamic mutation and apoptosis in neurodegeneration, which are two genetic mechanisms underlying several neuromuscular diseases.

Both Dr. Ikeda and Dr. Korneluk are members of the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network. The current agreement was built in part on an earlier, successful two-year collaboration between the two scientists and their research teams on the GenoSphere Project, also funded by JRDC. That collaboration led to the identification of the gene for Spinal Muscular Atrophy at the University of Ottawa in January, 1995.

The JRDC will contribute \$10 million (US) over five years, with an equivalent matching contribution to be provided from the Canadian partners. Funds from Japan will be provided from the JRDC International Joint Research Program which supports only two major international projects each year.

Commented Dr. Robert Korneluk, "This represents a major opportunity for Japanese and Canadian researchers to coordinate efforts and combine resources to aggressively pursue research into fundamental genetic mechanisms related to neuromuscular disease." Added Dr. Ikeda, "By coordinating Canadian and Japanese scientific programs, we hope to increase the pace of the research and to accomplish more together than apart."

This new phase in the cooperative venture between Canada and Japan means an exchange of scientists between the two countries, with researchers from Japan visiting the laboratories of the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network, and Canadians working with Dr. Ikeda at Tokhai University. The Canadian partners will support the project through both direct and indirect contributions. Said Dr. Michael Hayden, Scientific Director of the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network, "Japanese scientists working with the Network will have access to Network labs and core facilities, as well as the wealth of collaborations and scientific relationships available through our Network."

The Canadian Genetic Diseases Network is a consortium of 38 of Canada's leading geneticists who are linked with 12 universities, 9 hospitals, and 10 core facilities across the country. Under the federal government's Networks of Centres of Excellence Program, the CGDN performs leading-edge research on common genetically transmitted diseases and works with industry partners on methods of detection and treatment of the diseases.

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