BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

Eisai teams up with Merck to tackle NTDs in Kenya

August 28, 2019 | News

Eisai seeks to contribute to the health and welfare of people in developing and emerging countries.

Japan based pharmaceutical firm Eisai Co., Ltd. announced that it provides tanks to supply clean water for the neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) measures to the endemic regions in Kenya in collaboration with Merck. As part of its efforts to improve access to medicines, Eisai manufactures diethylcarbamazine (DEC) tablets, a treatment for a NTD named lymphatic filariasis (LF), at its Visag Plant in India and provides these DEC tablets free of charge to endemic countries through the World Health Organization (WHO) elimination program.

As of August 2019, Eisai has provided about 1.9 billion DEC tablets to 28 endemic countries, including Kenya. When LF becomes severe, it causes lymphatic dysfunction that leads to swelling of body parts such as the legs and the affected body parts become susceptible to bacteria. Therefore, it is important to keep the affected body parts clean with clean water. On the other hand, Merck provides praziquantel tablets, a treatment for a NTD named schistosomiasis, free of charge to Kenya and45 other endemic African countries.

Schistosomiasis is caused by parasitic worms (helminths) living in fresh water such as rivers and lakes. Humans are infected with schistosomiasis when worm larvae enter through the human skin. Therefore, it is very important to supply clean water to prevent infection. Eisai and Merck will jointly provide tanks to supply clean water necessary for measures to NTDs in the endemic areas, which are designated by Ministry of Health in Kenya and where it is difficult to secure clean water. Through this collaboration, Eisai and Merck will support the elimination of NTDs in these endemic areas.

Under its human health care (hhc) philosophy, Eisai seeks to contribute to the health and welfare of people in developing and emerging countries. Once they have recovered their health, they can resume productive activities, which will in turn contribute to economic development and expansion of the middle-income class.

Eisai considers this to be a long term investment in creating the markets of the future. By accelerating the development of new medicines for infectious diseases endemic in developing and emerging countries via leveraging partnerships, together with implementing activities to improve access to medicines including raising disease awareness locally and implementing price setting models that take income levels into account, Eisai strives to further contribute to increasing the benefits for patients and their families .