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Japan's Healios inks stem cells production deal with Astellas Pharma for $8 M

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To bring hope to people suffering from intractable diseases with its stem cell technology



Japan-based Healios K.K. has entered into a license agreement with Astellas Institute for Regenerative Medicine (AIRM), a subsidiary of Astellas Pharma Inc. that investigates novel pluripotent stem cell-derived therapeutic products, concerning the patent on a Retinal Pigment Epithelial (RPE) cells production method shared with RIKEN, National Research and Development Agency in Japan, and Osaka University, National University Corporation in Japan, and the patent on a method for purification of RPE cells shared with Osaka University.

RPE cells have recently attracted attention in the research of regenerative medicine for compensating for a loss or dysfunction due to age-related macular degeneration.

Healios has granted AIRM a non-exclusive right to use the patents in the countries where the patents are applied for worldwide except Japan, for AIRM's use in the development, manufacture, and marketing of therapies using pluripotent stem cell-derived RPE cells. Healios will receive an upfront payment of $3,000,000 upon execution of this agreement. In addition, Healios may subsequently receive up to $8,000,000 in milestone payments from AIRM upon US approval of products developed and manufactured using these patents.

Healios is researching new treatment methods to cure and bring hope to people suffering from intractable diseases with its stem cell technology. By not only conducting its own research and development, but also by providing its iPSC platform technology, experience, and intellectual property to other pharmaceutical companies, Healios will pave the way for the realisation of new therapeutic methods and strive to realise its mission through the development of the pharmaceutical industry as a whole.