

Debiopharm awards Japanese cancer scientists

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Doctors Oshima and Tanaka awarded with JCA-Mauvernay award



Singapore: Debiopharm Group presented the 'JCA-Mauvernay Award' to Dr Masanobu Oshima from Kanazawa University, Japan, for his research on 'the role of inflammatory responses in gastric cancer development' and Dr Shinji Tanaka from the Tokyo Medical and Dental University, for his research on the 'surgical oncology to develop novel targeted therapies for advanced digestive cancer'.

The ceremony was held during the general assembly of the 71st Annual Conference of the Japan Cancer Association (JCA) in Sapporo, Japan, on the theme, 'Towards a new era and liaison of cancer research and life science'. Professor Tetsuo Noda, president, JCA, and Dr Rolland-Yves Mauvernay, founder and president, Debiopharm Group, presented both recipients with the 2012 Award for their outstanding and innovative research in oncology.

Dr Masanobu Oshima works in the division of genetics, cancer research institute, Kanazawa University. His research focuses on the construction of a unique transgenic mouse model system to investigate the role of inflammatory responses in gastric tumorigenesis. In most cancer tissues, the prostaglandin E2 (PGE2) pathway is induced, however, how PGE2 itself induces tumorigenesis in cooperation with an activated oncogenic pathway such as wingless-type (Wnt) signalling activation remains unknown. His studies indicate that cooperation of Wnt activation and PGE2 associated inflammation is essential for gastric cancer development.

Dr Shinji Tanaka is an associate professor, department of hepato-biliary-pancreatic surgery, Tokyo Medical and Dental University. His work focuses on using clinical tissue samples to analyse refractory digestive cancers including hepato-biliary, pancreatic, oesophageal, and scirrhous gastric carcinomas, which have a poor outcome even after curative surgical resection. Dr Tanaka isolated a novel angiogenic switch gene called angiopoietin-2. His studies have demonstrated that oxidative stress in the host tissues is the only predictive factor of the recurrence after curative resection in hepatocellular carcinoma.