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The Center for iPS Cell Research and Application (CiRA) at Kyoto University and Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited have initiated a joint research program to develop clinical applications of induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS).

The 'Takeda-CiRA Joint Program for iPS Cell Applications' (T-CiRA) will begin research in six core directions to explore clinical applications of stem cells in therapeutic areas including cancer, heart failure, diabetes mellitus, neuro-degenerative disorders and intractable muscle diseases. It is anticipated that the Program will have over 10 projects with participation of more than 100 researchers at its steady state.

Induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cell technologies have the potential to bring about ground-breaking transformations to future medical treatments, and their applications span a variety of fields, including drug discovery, cell therapy and drug safety assessments.

During the next 10 years, Takeda will provide collaborative funding of 20 billion yen, and will jointly run multiple projects led by researchers invited from CiRA and other universities. The collaboration is expected to make significant contributions to the application of iPSC technology into clinical practice, which requires a significant amount of time, effort and investment. It is aligned with the purpose of National Projects of Japan on clinical applications of iPS cell technologies.

Commenting about this partnership, Nobel Laureate and Director of CiRA, Shinya Yamanaka, said, "I am happy to see that

the six research groups, comprised of researchers from Takeda and CiRA, have been kicked off their research projects, with generous support from Takeda. Using iPSC technology as a tool, this collaboration will develop new approaches to drug discovery and produce new cures to intractable diseases over the next 10 years.

"Takeda is proud to be part of this important research program. Academic and research partnerships, particularly with renowned scientific institutions such as Kyoto University, are critical to advancing clinical knowledge and potential future applications that could improve patient lives," said Christophe Weber, President & CEO of Takeda. "This partnership also marks a new direction for Takeda, by exploring cell therapies and genetic strategies to avert and remedy disease."

Currently, six projects are carried out simultaneously at Takeda's Shonan Research Center (Kanagawa, Japan) as the main venue, with approximately 60 researchers in total from CiRA and Takeda.