

Axcelead and Kyowa Kirin Started an Innovative Collaboration in Small-Molecule Drug Development

Tokyo, Japan, October 2, 2020 ---Axcelead Drug Discovery Partners Inc. (Axcelead, President: Yoshinori Ikeura) and Kyowa Kirin Co., Ltd. (Kyowa Kirin, TSE:4151, President and CEO: Masashi Miyamoto) announce that the companies have started collaboration on the development of innovative small-molecule drugs based on a novel drug discovery technology platform.

By integrating Axcelead 's broad range of small-molecule drug discovery technologies and experience with Kyowa Kirin's innovative drug discovery technologies, the companies will be able to build a novel small-molecule drug discovery technology platform. Utilizing this technology platform the companies aim to expand R&D pipeline of Kyowa Kirin through the discovery of multiple innovative drug candidates for diverse targets that were inaccessible so far.

"Our mission is to contribute to the discovery of innovative drugs as the best partner for people engaged in drug discovery, based on the technology and know-how we have accumulated through our research in the pharmaceutical industry and the vast amount of drug discovery data we have collected," said Yoshinori Ikeura, President of Axcelead. "We are delighted to be able to develop fundamental technologies that will open up a new era of small-molecule drugs and contribute to the discovery of drugs for a variety of previously inaccessible drug targets."

"We are actively engaged in small-molecule drug discovery by rational drug design including our proprietary structural analysis technology of disease-associated biomolecules", said Yoshifumi Torii, Ph.D., Executive Officer, Vice President, Head of R&D Division of Kyowa Kirin. "I am delighted to collaborate with Axcelead through integration of both companies' technologies to overcome the difficulties of small-molecule drug discovery and create innovative drugs."

With the advances of biotechnology in the field of drug discovery research, many companies are now focusing their efforts on the research for new drugs with various modalities, such as biologics and nucleic acid drugs that act on drug targets that have been difficult to approach with small-molecule drugs. On the other hand, small-molecule



drugs have a lower burden on patients in terms of administration than biologics. They also have the potential to lower drug prices by reducing manufacturing costs, which can be expected to be advantageous in terms of healthcare financing. For this reason, the social need for small-molecular drugs will continue to be high, and further technological innovation is desired. In this regard, the development of innovative fundamental technologies that can expand the range of drug targets in small-molecule drugs will promote a paradigm shift in small-molecule drug discovery research and open up a new era of small-molecule drugs.

Axcelead is the first integrated drug discovery solutions provider in the pharmaceutical industry in Japan, having succeeded the drug discovery research capabilities of Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited. The company provides integrated services, from discovery of drug targets to optimization of small- and medium-molecule drug candidates, in which the company has particular expertise, and to the process of bridging the gap to clinical development.

Kyowa Kirin commits to innovative drug discovery driven by state-of-the-art technologies. The company focuses on creating new values in the four therapeutic areas: nephrology, oncology, immunology/allergy and neurology. Under the Kyowa Kirin brand, the employees from 40 group companies across North America, EMEA and Asia/Oceania unite to champion the interests of patients and their caregivers in discovering solutions wherever there are unmet medical needs.