



Press Release

Provision of HLA-homozygous iPS cells to Novo Nordisk

Kyoto, Japan, May 19th, 2021 –The CiRA Foundation® (“CiRA_F”; located in Kyoto, Japan) and Novo Nordisk A/S (Denmark) today announced that CiRA_F will provide HLA-homozygous iPS cell stock to Novo Nordisk.

1. Overview

We are pleased to announce the first provision of our HLA homozygous iPS cell stock for research to an overseas pharmaceutical company. The recipient, Novo Nordisk, is a global pharmaceutical company headquartered in Denmark with affiliates in 80 countries and is developing medicines for the treatment of diabetes, obesity, hemophilia and other diseases. One of their goals is to develop stem cell therapies, which is why they are also working on a project to create an embryonic stem (ES) cell bank. Novo Nordisk's application for provision of the HLA-homozygous iPS cell stock to CiRA_F was based on the conclusion that iPS cells are more suitable than ES cells for some medical applications, such as macrophage differentiation. Accordingly, CiRA_F has been approved by Novo Nordisk as an official supplier for the HUMAN BIOSAMPLES IN PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH project (a research project in which Novo Nordisk collects human samples of blood and other materials that are targeted for pharmaceutical development).

2. Background

The iPS Cell Stock Project is a project that began at the Center for iPS Cell Research and Application (CiRA), Kyoto University, in 2013 with generous support from the Japanese government and was transferred to CiRA_F in April 2020. To date, the stock has produced 27 HLA-homozygous iPS cell lines for medical applications, and all recipients of the stock have been research institutions in Japan so far. These iPS cells have been used in clinical studies for several diseases, including for age-related macular degeneration led by Kobe City Eye Hospital and Parkinson's disease led by Kyoto University Hospital. In order to promote iPS cell-based therapies, CiRA_F has obtained prior consent from blood donors for the commercialization of iPS cell-based therapies and for their use in clinical research and trials. We also evaluate the quality of the iPS cells that we have produced before shipping them. In response, Novo Nordisk requested provision of iPS cells from our stock.

3. Summary of the plans

1) Execution of contracts

Novo Nordisk and CiRA_F will proceed to formalize the agreement.

2) Research period at Novo Nordisk using our stock

From the arrival of the cells to December 31, 2025.

The iPS cells provided by CiRA_F will be used for research on stem cell-based therapies if they are found suitable for use in the experiments conducted by Novo Nordisk after checking their stability and differentiation ability.

4. About CiRA Foundation

The CiRA Foundation (CiRA_F) was recognized as a public interest incorporated foundation in April 2020. Its principle purpose is to provide the best iPS cell technology at affordable prices.

CiRA_F manages the iPS Cell Stock for Regenerative Medicine Project, which was started by the Center for iPS Cell Research and Application (CiRA), Kyoto University, in 2013. The aim of this project is to prepare multiple iPS cell lines manufactured from healthy donors homozygous for human leukocyte antigens (HLA). These lines will expand the number of people who can receive related therapies with minimal immune reactions and are provided to academic and industrial organizations. CiRA_F contributes to the commercialization of regenerative medicine by providing services including the manufacturing of iPS cell-derived products, quality assessment, storage, and publication of SOPs for manufacturing.

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-iPS Cells

