

International Symposium on "Molecular Therapy for Muscular Dystrophy"

Tokyo, Japan, November 26-27, 2002

Forewords

It is a great pleasure to announce the opening of this small group workshop. All of the attendants are welcomed to join with this 2-days workshop for the development of the therapy on muscular dystrophy therapy. Particularly, I would like to express my great thanks for many oversea researchers to come to Japan. Here in Japan, the Ministry of Health and Welfare of the Government sponsors the study for analysis of molecular pathogenesis and development of the molecular and chemical therapies on muscular dystrophy since 1970. Two years ago, our research leader, Dr. Ki-ichi Arahata, was suddenly and unfortunately passed away. Dr Sugita and Japanese muscle researchers were sincerely discouraged. Now I succeed this group research. I hope that this workshop will overwhelm this sad happening.

Ryoichi Matsuda organizes this workshop particularly to discuss chemical therapies. All of us will agree that the gene therapy or cell therapy is the most promising method, but it is time-consuming and still not practical. Personally I have a strong interest on the chemical agent for the prevention of clinical deterioration of muscular dystrophy. In 2001, Ryoichi Matsuda reported that negamycin can be a useful substitute of gentamicin in mdx mouse because of its high efficiency of dystrophin read-through expression and low incidence of side effects compared with Gentamicin. negamycin is a dipeptide antibiotic, found in Japan in 1970, which is known to skip the stop codon in point mutation. If negamycin works well, it would be an excellent tool for approximately 10-15 % of DMD/BMD patients. Other chemicals will also be discussed in this workshop.

I hope that all of you will have a lot of discussion and fun in this workshop and get a good idea for the excellent therapy of muscular dystrophy. Thank you again for all of your participation to this workshop.

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