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THE OTSUKA WHATS & WHOS

Otsuka
people creating
new products
for better health
worldwide

Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology Honored Otsuka 2 Awards

Award ceremony held at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology

The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology awarded Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. two commendations for Science and Technology in Tokyo, Japan.

One of the prizes for Science and Technology, in the Development Category, was for the research and development of delamanid. It is an effective treatment for multi-drug resistant tuberculosis. The other prize was for the development of tolvaptan, an antagonist of the vasopressin V_2 receptor.

The commendations were presented in late spring in a ceremony held in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology.

(left to right) Hidetsugu Tsubouchi, Ph.D.Compliance & Ethics Department, manager; Hirofumi Sasaki, Medicinal Chemistry Research Laboratories, associate head and project OPC; Makoto Matsumoto, Ph.D, Pharmaceutical Business Division, senior director; Hiroyuki Hashizume, Pharmaceutical Marketing Headquarters, Product Planning and Management Group, product management manager; Masanori Kawasaki, TB Projects, associate director

Each year, 9.6 million people are newly infected by tuberculosis (TB). Of these cases, 480,000 patients develop multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB). And in that group, 22% develop extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB). There have been no new anti-TB drugs developed since the introduction of rifampicin over forty years ago.

Senior director of the Pharmaceutical Business Division, Mr. Makoto Matsumoto, Ph.D., said, “Delamanid was approved as a new drug for the first time in approximately 40 years. However, many besides those being awarded this time contributed their efforts and cooperation during the approval process, which took over 20 years.”

He continued to thank, “all those who were involved from the discovery and development of delamanid to the approval of the drug. Otsuka will continue its efforts to increase the number of patients using the drug, and will continue contributing to tuberculosis treatment worldwide.”

Delamanid was approved in Japan, Europe, and Korea in 2014. The commendation was awarded to delamanid for its contribution to the medical care of TB, by addressing the pressing need for new effective treatments to the increasing occurrence of MDR-TB.

Hiroyuki Fujiki, Ph.D, New Drug Research Division, Biology and Translational Research Unit, senior research scientist; Yoshitaka Yamamura, Pharmaceutical Business Division, senior director; Youichi Yabuuchi, Ph.D, Otsuka Pharmaceutical Factory, Inc., corporate adviser; Hidenori Ogawa, Ph.D, Medicinal Chemistry Research Laboratories

A doctor looking for a drug that helped his patients excrete only water unlike other diuretics inspired Otsuka Pharmaceutical to start researching for an agent to do just that.

It was discovered that this vasopressin V_2 receptor antagonist may hinder the proliferation and enlargement of the cysts in the hereditary disease Autosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease (ADPKD).

Otsuka subsequently played a pivotal role in the clinical development of tolvaptan for ADPKD, and it is presently the only treatment option known to delay the long-term progression of ADPKD.

“I heard that this award commemorates ‘people’ who make achievements, and I am deeply moved by the fact that my life’s work involving the discovery and development of tolvaptan, which I spent 30 years on, has been recognized,” said Mr. Yoshitaka Yamamura, senior director of the Pharmaceutical Business Division.

“The ‘rugged’ drug discovery we started from scratch is now contributing to patients daily, and I am sincerely proud of that fact. I hope that new drug discoveries will be made for drugs that ‘originate in Tokushima and are the world’s first’.”

The commendation was awarded to tolvaptan for its contribution to the medical fields of heart failure and liver cirrhosis, as an agent with a new mode of action of water diuresis, as well as the only treatment option known to delay the long-term progression of ADPKD.

About the Prize
The commendation for Science and Technology from the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, honors achievements in science and technology. By encouraging engagement in this field the aim is to contribute further to the development of innovative research and inventions that directly improve people's lives.