

**The Japanese Cancer Association and Debiopharm Group™
Present Doctors Oshima and Tanaka with the 2012 'JCA-Mauvernay Award'
For their innovative and outstanding cancer research**

Lausanne, Switzerland – September 21, 2012 - Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm), a Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical group of companies with a focus on the development of prescription drugs that target unmet medical needs and companion diagnostics, today presented the 'JCA-Mauvernay Award' to Doctor Masanobu Oshima from Kanazawa University for his research on '*The Role of Inflammatory Responses in Gastric Cancer Development*' and Doctor Shinji Tanaka from the Tokyo Medical and Dental University, for his research on the '*Surgical Oncology to Develop Novel Targeted Therapies for Advanced Digestive Cancer*'.

The ceremony was held during the General Assembly of the 71st Annual Conference of the Japan Cancer Association (JCA) in Sapporo, Japan on the following theme: '*Towards a new era and liaison of cancer research and life science*'. Professor Tetsuo Noda, President of the JCA, and Dr Rolland-Yves Mauvernay, Founder and President of Debiopharm Group™ presented both recipients with the 2012 Award for their outstanding and innovative research in oncology.

'We congratulate both scientists for their hard work and accomplishments', said Rolland-Yves Mauvernay. 'They have set the standard for innovation in the field of gastric and digestive cancer. We hope their work will lead to major and more targeted medical discoveries leading to effective treatments in the years to come'.

Dr Masanobu Oshima works in the Division of Genetics at the Cancer Research Institute of Kanazawa University.

His research focuses on the construction of a unique transgenic mouse model system to investigate the role of inflammatory responses in gastric tumorigenesis. In most cancer tissues, the prostaglandin E2 (PGE2) pathway is induced, however how PGE2 itself induces tumorigenesis in cooperation with an activated oncogenic pathway such as wingless-type (Wnt) signalling activation remains unknown.

His studies indicate that cooperation of Wnt activation and PGE2 associated inflammation is essential for gastric cancer development. He has shown the role of both inflammation and Wnt pathway separately in gastric cancer by using his mouse model. These findings will contribute significantly to understanding the biological *in vivo* mechanism of gastric cancer development.

Dr Shinji Tanaka is an associate professor in the Department of Hepato-Biliary-Pancreatic Surgery at the Tokyo Medical and Dental University.

His work focuses on using clinical tissue samples to analyse refractory digestive cancers including hepato-biliary, pancreatic, oesophageal, and scirrhous gastric carcinomas, which have a poor outcome even after curative surgical resection.

His lab has analysed over 1000 clinical samples from surgically resected tissue and isolated 28 novel cancer related genes. This has allowed them to clarify several oncogenic mechanisms.

Dr Tanaka isolated a novel angiogenic switch gene called angiopoietin-2. Angiogenic switch is a hallmark of cancer progression *in-vivo*. Recent clinical trials of the anti-angiopoietin-2 peptide revealed it as a promising agent to treat advanced cancers that are resistant to VEGF inhibitors.

His studies have demonstrated that oxidative stress in the host tissues is the only predictive factor of the recurrence after curative resection in hepatocellular carcinoma. And more recently he identified one type of agent specifically targeting cancer stem cell. This discovery should lead to a promising approach for radical cure of pancreatic cancer.

About Debiopharm Group™

Debiopharm Group™ (Debiopharm) is a Swiss-based global biopharmaceutical group of companies with a focus on the development of prescription drugs that target unmet medical needs. The group licenses, develops and/or co-develops promising biological and small molecule drug candidates having reached clinical development phases I, II or III, as well as earlier stage candidates. It develops its products for global registration and maximum commercial potential. The products are out-licensed to pharmaceutical partners for sales and marketing. Debiopharm is also active in the field of companion diagnostics with a view to progressing in the area of personalised medicine. Debiopharm independently funds the worldwide development of all its products while providing expertise in pre-clinical and clinical trials, manufacturing, drug delivery and formulation, and regulatory affairs. For more information on Debiopharm Group™, please visit: www.debiopharm.com.

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