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RIKEN, city of Kawasaki to cooperate in R&D

The RIKEN Yokohama Institute and the city of Kawasaki are tying up in research and development. Kawasaki Mayor Takao Abe, RIKEN Director Ryoji Noyori and Yokohama Institute Director Tomoya Ogawa signed a basic agreement regarding the R&D cooperation on Dec. 11.

The first collaborative project is to be research into clinical applications of genetic diagnostic technology in a Kawasaki municipal hospital. The RIKEN Genomic Sciences Center's Functional Genomics Research Group is scheduled to start clinical application of the SMAP (smart amplification process) method, a technology developed at GSC, which allows rapid detection of single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) with high accuracy. This in turn enables fast diagnosis of drug efficacy and secondary effects. The method requires only 30 minutes and a single drop of blood.

Both the research institute and the city of Kawasaki, in Kanagawa Prefecture just outside of Tokyo, stand to reap enormous benefits from the tie-up. The city, which has been actively promoting high-tech R&D, especially in the life-sciences field, will get an economic boost, helping its attempts in creation of industry and nurturing of human resources in the information-technology field. It also hopes to attract international attention to Kanagawa Science Park, a high-tech R&D facility in the city's Takatsu Ward that focuses on business promotion.

The Yokohama Institute, for its part, will be able to use city infrastructure, such as the municipal hospital and the Kanagawa Science Park. Both will benefit from licensing of new technologies and intellectual property.

The RIKEN Yokohama Institute started research activities in 2000 in the Tsurumi area of Yokohama. The new cooperative agreement will help the lab expand these activities.

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