

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **QBRI-Kyoto University Joint Symposium**

### ***Stem Cells Research and Genomics***

Doha, Qatar March 2015 — The Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI) and Kyoto University, one of the world's leading scientific innovators and Japan's largest cutting-edge research institution, jointly organized a symposium on stem cell research gathering participants from different institutes in Doha along with six Kyoto University distinguished scientists. The Japanese delegation was led by Professor Ryosuke Takahashi, Chair of the Department of Neurology. Delegates and attendees discussed the most recent advances and innovative scientific discoveries in the stem cell research field. The symposium displayed very high attendance rate underlying the importance of stem cells to the research community in Qatar.

During the symposium, scientists shared their latest findings in the stem cell research areas of genomics, disease modelling and therapeutic screening including stem cell advances in diabetes and neurological disorders. The symposium also included two panel discussions moderated by QBRI scientists. The panel's debate focused on the affairs of using stem cells for disease modeling and cell therapy, and contribution to translational research. Both panel discussions were engaging and interactive providing valuable insight to the audience in the field of stem cell research as it relates to the Middle East Region.

The symposium concluded with a QBRI-Kyoto University meeting chaired by Prof. Hilal Lashuel Executive Director of QBRI and Prof. Fumihiko Matsuda of Kyoto University. During the meeting both parties have discussed potential partnership opportunities ranging from research collaboration, to technology transfer, to training scientist and ways to enhance knowledge exchange between both institutions leading to fostering programs of mutual interests.

Last year, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, accompanied by a delegation from Qatar Foundation's Research and Development (QF R&D) visited a number of research centres in Japan with the goal of increasing research and development collaboration between the two countries.

In Kyoto, Her Highness visited the Center for induced pluripotent stem (iPS) Cell Research and Application (CiRA) at Kyoto University, which was created with the mission of advancing cell research aimed at drug discovery and regenerative medicine (cell transplantation therapy). This symposium is another major initiative to bear fruit following Her Highness' visit to Japan and marks the first Qatar-Japan stem cells bridge programme in biomedical research and personalised healthcare.

Through this latest initiative, QBRI is contributing to Qatar Foundation's mission to build Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by improving and transforming healthcare through research in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases affecting Qatar and the region. QBRI has taken important steps to develop such innovative platform technologies, and through interactions with Kyoto University, QBRI is furthering Qatar's capabilities to successfully establish these platforms. Dr. Lashuel stated "we are very keen on developing the stem cell platform in Qatar and train the next generation of scientists by partnering with world-class institutions like Kyoto University"

QBRI is already engaged in basic and applied medical research that supports the translation of novel scientific discoveries into more efficient therapies and better preventative strategies for human diseases, leading to the development of personalised medicine. With diabetes being a major challenging disease in the Qatari population stem cells and regenerative medicine offer hope to many afflicted individuals. Dr. Lashuel added "at QBRI stem cell platform will be utilised largely in diabetes research"

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#### About Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI)

QBRI is a national institute, under the umbrella of Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) that aims to improve and transform healthcare through innovation in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases affecting the Qatari population and the region. As a disease-focused institute, QBRI focuses on applying integrative and multidisciplinary approaches to provide novel insights into the molecular basis of Breast Cancer; Type 2 Diabetes; and Neurological Disorders such as Autism and Epilepsy and the development of novel biomarkers, diagnostic and therapeutic strategies to facilitate early diagnosis, treatment and management of these devastating diseases.

#### About Kyoto University

Kyoto University, or Kyodai is a national university located in Kyoto, Japan. It is the second oldest Japanese university, one of the highest ranked universities in Asia and one of Japan's National Seven Universities.

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