

Asahi Kasei Pharma Corp.  
RaQualia Pharma Inc.  
March 26, 2018

### **License agreement for novel P2X7 receptor antagonist**

Asahi Kasei Pharma Corp. (Head Office: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan; President & Representative Director: Yutaka Shibata) and RaQualia Pharma Inc. (Head Office: Nagoya, Aichi, Japan; President & Representative Director: Naoki Tani) have entered into a license agreement for a novel P2X7 receptor antagonist discovered through a research collaboration between the two companies.

Under the research collaboration started in November 2013, Asahi Kasei Pharma and RaQualia Pharma have engaged in collaborative research to discover candidate compounds for development based on congruent management principles of promoting open innovation to reinforce their respective presence as R&D-centric specialized pharma and drug discovery companies.

By leveraging Asahi Kasei Pharma's extensive know-how for pharmaceutical R&D and RaQualia Pharma's strength in ion channel drug discovery technology, the collaboration succeeded in obtaining AKP-23494954/RQ-00466479, which is a P2X7 receptor antagonist, as a candidate drug to be a new therapeutic agent for neuropathic pain treatment. In March 2018 the research is authorized to proceed to the preclinical development phase.

P2X7 receptor is a type of ion channel expressed in glial cells of the central nervous system, and is known to be deeply involved in the process of forming and sustaining chronic pain. There is an elevated need for new therapies for neuropathic pain in particular among categories of chronic pain due to the insufficient effectiveness and problems of side effects when existing analgesics are used. Exhibiting an analgesic effect with a different mechanism from existing drugs, the selective P2X7 receptor antagonist AKP-23494954/RQ-00466479 is expected to become an innovative new drug for neuropathic pain as an intractable disease.

Under the terms of the license agreement announced today, Asahi Kasei Pharma obtains exclusive rights for the worldwide development, manufacture, and sale of P2X7 receptor antagonist, while RaQualia Pharma receives a lump-sum payment as well as milestone payments corresponding to stages of development and royalty payments in proportion to sales amounts. Asahi Kasei Pharma will be responsible for the development of a new drug using AKP-23494954/RQ-00466479 as the active ingredient, starting with preclinical studies.

Asahi Kasei Pharma's President & Representative Director, Yutaka Shibata commented, "Pain management is an important area of focus for Asahi Kasei Pharma. I am very pleased to conclude this license agreement as a result of collaborative research with RaQualia Pharma. Our two companies will continue to work together to advance the development of P2X7 receptor antagonist, and I look forward to it becoming a new pain therapy that meets the needs of patients in the near future."

RaQualia Pharma's President & CEO, Naoki Tani commented, "I am delighted to conclude this license agreement with Asahi Kasei Pharma as a result of successful collaborative research. The outstanding achievement was reached by researchers of our two companies working closely

together. A paradigm shift is taking place regarding drug discovery, with more diversified technology being applied and sharper focus on diseases with higher needs for new treatments. I think we have shown a good example of what can be achieved by open innovation through collaboration between a pharmaceutical company and bio-venture in Japan.”

Through the license agreement, Asahi Kasei Pharma and RaQualia Pharma will strive to further strengthen the pipeline of drugs for pain treatment, an area of focus for both companies, and contribute to improving the quality of life for patients by providing new treatment options.

#### About RaQualia Pharma

RaQualia Pharma Inc. has its research headquarters in Nagoya, Japan and is a research and development based pharmaceutical company whose aim is to create new pharmaceutical products with cutting-edge science and technology focusing on medical fields where patients have the greatest need. RaQualia create development compounds, the seeds for new drugs, via an open collaboration network which they have designed. RaQualia then deliver valuable new treatments to patients by licensing these compounds to partners who in turn bring that innovation to market.

For more information, please visit [www.raqualia.com/](http://www.raqualia.com/).

#### About Asahi Kasei Pharma

Asahi Kasei Pharma Corporation, headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, is a research-based health care innovator that discovers, develops, manufactures, and markets pharmaceuticals and diagnostic products that address unmet medical needs. Asahi Kasei Pharma is a wholly owned business unit of Asahi Kasei Corporation, a US\$17 billion company that provides innovative, science-based solutions to a diverse range of markets in the Material, Homes, and Health Care business sectors. For more information, visit [www.asahikasei-pharma.co.jp/en/](http://www.asahikasei-pharma.co.jp/en/).

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