

Shiseido Signs Alliance Agreement with Prominent U.S. Dermatology Lab, Expands Long-Term Research Collaboration and Promotes Skin Health

On July 1, 2015, Shiseido Co., Ltd. entered into a new collaboration agreement with the dermatology research center at Massachusetts General Hospital in the United States known as the MGH-Harvard Cutaneous Biology Research Center (CBRC^{*1}). Built on a relationship that began in 1989, this new agreement calls for an expansion of collaborative research into skin biology as well as efforts to communicate important information about skin protection and skin health to the public.



Dr. D. Fisher of CBRC (left) and Mr. Y. Shimatani (right) of Shiseido at the first meeting of ELC

A governing body of the newly formed collaboration, the Executive Leadership Committee (ELC^{*2}), held its inaugural meeting Thursday, July 9 to review and agree upon joint research themes.

To date, the collaboration between Shiseido and CBRC has focused mainly on research and development. The new alliance agreement expands the collaborative research projects and establishes the ELC to serve as the decision-making body overseeing the relationship. A provision in the agreement calls for the two organizations to engage in collaborative efforts to raise public awareness of general skin health and ways to protect the skin from sun exposure, environmental factors and the effects of aging.

“As our understanding of skin biology expands, the ability to develop innovative therapies and products that can preserve and enhance skin health also increases,” says David E. Fisher, MD, PhD, chief of Dermatology at Massachusetts General Hospital and a member of the new ELC. “The collaborative studies that will be made possible through this exciting new alliance with Shiseido seek to build on this growing body of knowledge in novel ways that will ultimately benefit the public.”

^{*1} CBRC: The Cutaneous Biology Research Center, established by Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School with major support from Shiseido in 1989, is a general laboratory engaged in leading-edge research and development in the dermatological field.

^{*2} Main members: Y. Shimatani, the chief research and development officer, and four more members (Shiseido); Dr. D. Fisher, the director, and three more members (CBRC)

True transformation to achieve unprecedented innovation

In December 2014, Shiseido announced its medium-to-long-term strategy called “VISION 2020”, with the aim of establishing the company as one that continues to meet consumer expectations that are constantly rising. “VISION 2020” sets out the goal of reforming the way the company operates in various ways, including increasing its marketing and R&D investments to achieve top-line growth and profit increase. With regard to brand strengthening, which will become Shiseido’s growth engine, talented people and organizations with high performance capabilities will develop comprehensive brand marketing from research and production to customer services. As for R&D, the sales to R&D expense ratio will be increased from the current 1.8% to 2.5% by 2020, and as a new research base, the company will launch the “Global Innovation Center (tentative name) ^{*3}” by the year 2018. As such, efforts will be made to promote innovative product development based on advanced basic science technologies, coupled and integrated with equally innovative marketing. Using the concept of “Fusion & Innovation ^{*4}”, R&D will work towards transformative research in the pursuit of innovations that support the following three ideas:

- To create innovations that resonate with consumers
- To bolster Shiseido’s scientific foundation, infrastructure and research in new areas and create a fusion of a wide range of knowledge
- To form a global R&D network

^{*3} Global Innovation Center, due to be launched in Yokohama’s Minato Mirai 21 district in 2018 as a global innovation hub

^{*4} In line with the idea “Fusion with Partners,” Shiseido will create an open, collaborative research style with external institutions both in Japan and abroad by promoting fusion of a wide range of knowledge.

New Alliance Agreement with the CBRC

With major support from Shiseido, the CBRC was established in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1989, as a leading-edge dermatology laboratory that attracts up-and-coming researchers from around the world. Since then, the CBRC and Shiseido have conducted advanced joint research in the area of dermatological science, and to date, numerous important findings pertaining to skin science and hair science have emerged, such as:

- Discovery of the interaction of nerves and skin immune cells
- Discovery of the importance of laminin 5^{*5} in the skin basal membrane
- Elucidation of the molecular mechanism in the hair receding period
- Elucidation of the relationship between angiogenesis-related factors and photoaging
- Elucidation of the relationship between photoaging and skin lymphatic vessel functions
- Elucidation of the mechanism of pigment cell activation in hair

^{*5} laminin 5: This protein was called “laminin 5” when discovered. Now it is called “laminin 332”.

As times have changed, goods, services, and information around the world have become connected, generating shifts in values and lifestyles. Customers can actively access such goods, services, and information and act on their own, and it is changing their lives. The previous collaboration between Shiseido and CBRC had been limited to research and development, but to respond to these consumer-related changes, the new alliance will seek opportunities to inform people and increase awareness about maintaining healthy skin. Specifically, the collaboration will pursue three programs:

1. Joint research between the CBRC and Shiseido on skin science that Shiseido aims to use to develop improved products
2. Joint activities with the goal of communicating objective and sound information about skin health
3. Joint research on advanced skin science and hair science

In Program 1, skin science themes deemed most promising for improved skin health will be evaluated and explored. In Program 2, activities that are directed to informing the public, such as symposia, educational programs for researchers, webinars and press events will be planned and implemented. In Program 3, strategic skin science and hair science themes will be advanced through collaborative research, which may provide the foundation for products that help maintain better skin and hair health, or may advance the existing body of scientific knowledge, perhaps leading to important and promising new research pathways in the future.

To provide enough time for medium- to long-term research and development, the agreement is set for 6 years (2015-2020).

“With an alliance that has been ongoing for nearly three decades, Shiseido and the CBRC have cultivated a strong relationship based on mutual trust, and the collaborative research between us has contributed greatly to Shiseido’s innovations,” says Youichi Shimatani, the chief research and development officer, Shiseido Co., Ltd., “I am delighted about this new chapter and I look forward with excitement to the innovations it will hold.”

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