

Okazaki Conference

The 71st Okazaki Conference New Perspectives on Molecular Science of Glycoconjugates

(October 12–14, 2011)

Organizers: S. Wakatsuki (*KEK*), K. Kato (*IMS*), R. Kato (*KEK*), Y. Yamaguchi (*RIKEN*), T. Satoh (*Nagoya City Univ.*), Y. Kamiya (*IMS*)

Invited Overseas Speakers: M. von Itzstein (*Griffith Univ.*), K.-H. Khoo (*Academia Sinica*), J. C. Paulson (*Scripps Res. Inst.*), T. Peters (*Univ. Lübeck*), R. J. Woods (*Univ. Georgia*)

The 71st Okazaki Conference “New perspectives on molecular science of glycoconjugates” was held on October 12–14, 2011. We had 73 participants including 24 invited speakers and 18 poster presenters. The purpose of this conference was to provide a forum where researchers from various fields related to glycoscience come together and exchange their idea.

Carbohydrate chain is called “third life chain” along with nucleic acid and protein and its biological importance has been widely recognized in recent years. However, molecular science of glycoconjugates has remarkably lagged behind those of other biomolecules. This is because carbohydrate chain structures are not directly encoded in the genome and exhibit microheterogeneities along with significant degrees of freedom in internal motion. Moreover, biological functions of the

carbohydrate chains are promoted through their cluster formation mediated by weak intermolecular interactions. Thus, decoding processes of *glycocodes* involves a lot of important issues that remain to be addressed in fields of molecular science.

The conference opened with an introductory lecture by Prof. Paulson (*Scripps Res. Inst.*), which was followed by a variety of topics delivered by researchers from different disciplines including leading glycoscientists. Every talk elicited active discussion with naïve and pertinent questions and comments, which made the conference exciting, enjoyable, and memorable, opening up the possibilities of new collaborations among the participants. Finally, we discussed perspectives on novel molecular science approaches towards understanding of the mechanisms underlying glycoconjugate functions. The conference was so successful that invited overseas speakers remarked that it was one of the best conferences they had ever participated in. We anticipated that the exciting three-day event would be a prelude to new wave of molecular science for providing atomic views of dynamic glycoconjugate functions.



The 71st Okazaki Conference “New Perspectives on Molecular Science of Glycoconjugates,” October 12–14, 2011.