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KT Corp develops AI-based COVID-19 research

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New Project to Help KT Develop Global Epidemic Prevention Platform



KT Corp., South Korea's largest telecommunications company, is developing a COVID-19 infection risk assessment model, using its artificial intelligence (AI) and Big Data-based digital contact tracing technology, adding to global efforts to tackle the escalating pandemic.

The Korean telecom leader's new pilot project is supported by the Research Investment for Global Health Technology Fund, better known as RIGHT Fund. The global research fund accepted the promising proposal by KT to develop AI-based technology that assesses COVID-19 infection risks.

KT plans to use the pilot project results to apply for a larger-scale, RIGHT Fund-supported project in 2021. RIGHT Fund is a global health research funding agency established in 2018 with contributions from Korea's Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Korean life science companies to promote global public health.

For the pilot project, KT plans to assess COVID-19 infection risks by using AI and Big Data to analyze data on the movement of smartphone users and those who have been tested positive for COVID-19 and made public by the government.

Mobile Doctor Corp. is also participating in this project, which is scheduled to end in February 2021. Both KT and Mobile Doctor, a provider of data-based platforms and solutions for health management, are members of a consortium conducting "A Next Generation Surveillance Study for Epidemic Preparedness," a three-year research program financed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

KT expects the assessment model, based on identification of those who have been exposed to carriers of the novel coronavirus directly and indirectly, will help prevent further transmission of the COVID-19 pandemic while minimizing the risk of personal information leakage.

Korea's top telecom company also looks forward to acquiring the capabilities to identify vulnerable high-risk groups in case of a second wave of the pandemic or group infections, and promote an effective use of limited medical resources, such as medical personnel and test kits.