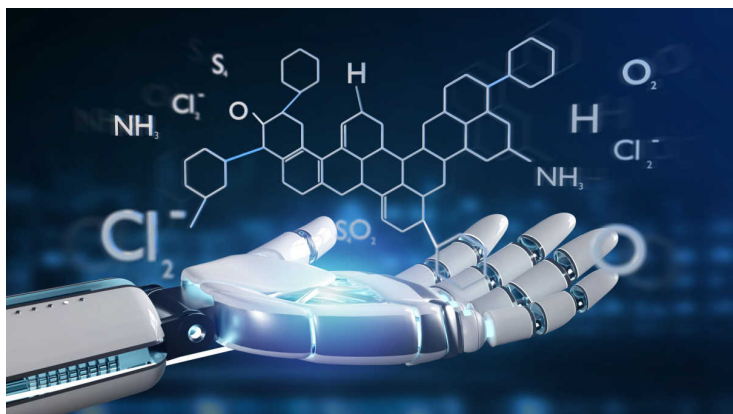


Japan-based Chugai Pharma and Omron focus on automation for drug discovery research

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Begin testing of flexible and highly human-friendly lab automation system at Chugai Life Science Park Yokohama



Japanese firms Chugai Pharmaceutical Co., and Omron Corporation are working together on the automation of research processes to improve the productivity of drug discovery research, raise the quality of experimental data, and enable new experimental activities.

The companies have been conducting joint research toward the realisation of a flexible lab automation system with a higher degree of freedom, more versatility, and greater human compatibility than existing systems, and they are now embarking on verification testing of the system at Chugai's new research centre, Chugai Life Science Park Yokohama.

The verification tests involve installing the system in Chugai Life Science Park Yokohama to establish and trial basic drug discovery research operations such as transportation of lab samples and operation control of equipment by mobile robots, and the use of dual arm robots to operate a variety of experimental tools. This new system has the potential to enable drug discovery experiments to continue even overnight when the lab is unstaffed, and leave humans with more time to spend on creative activities.

Through this verification testing, Chugai is looking to advance automation incorporating robotic technologies and artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted drug discovery at its centre for new drug discovery research, thereby achieving dramatic gains in the productivity and quality of research.

Omron will be using the technologies created through this joint research to accelerate their efforts to solve social issues by "empowering people through automation" in each of its focal domains.