

Otsuka, Pioneer form alliance to develop endoscope

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Singapore: Otsuka Medical Devices, a wholly owned subsidiary of Otsuka, and Pioneer have reached an agreement to form a business alliance for the joint development of an innovative endoscope for medical use. Pioneer intends to make use of its ultra-sensitive imaging technology based on HEED-HARP technology to develop a camera unit of medical endoscope jointly with Otsuka. Otsuka plans to sell the medical endoscope using this camera unit worldwide.

The HEED-HARP technology employs an image sensor that combines the high-efficiency electron emission device (HEED), a thin electron-source array developed by Pioneer, with the high-gain avalanche rushing amorphous photoconductor (HARP), a world-leading, ultra-sensitive, photoelectric conversion film primarily developed by the Science & Technology Research Laboratories of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK). Ultra-sensitive cameras incorporating HEED and HARP technologies can be used for endoscopes as well as a wide range of other applications.

Mr Hiroshi Shirafuji, president and representative director of Otsuka Medical Devices, said, "By incorporating Pioneer's HEED-HARP technology in a medical endoscope, I believe we can succeed in developing a revolutionary new endoscope. We will also promote this business alliance for our global business strategy with a view to applying these technologies in our other existing business."

Mr Susumu Kotani, president and CEO of Pioneer, said, "In our medium-term plan, which we announced on November 29 last year, we set out to enter and develop new business fields. One of these fields is medical- and health-related devices, and we plan to enter the field by applying the company's proprietary imaging and optical technologies. We believe that by combining our ultra-sensitive imaging technology with the expertise and technologies that OMD has in the medical devices field, this alliance will lead to the creation of a path-breaking new products."

Through this alliance, both companies plan to move forward with the development of a minimally invasive Medical Endoscope to reduce patients' physical burden from surgery.