

NEWS RELEASE

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEQUIO PHARMA and Interprotein Announce Collaborative Research Agreement on Potential Assessment of Curcumin and Curcumin Analogs/Derivatives as Anti-COVID-19 Drugs</b></p>
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March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – LEQUIO PHARMA CO., LTD. (LEQUIO PHARMA) and Interprotein Corporation (Interprotein) today announced that both the companies entered into a collaborative research agreement. The partnership will focus on drug repurposing approach of curcumin and drug discovery research from curcumin analogs/derivatives for anti-COVID-19 drugs.

Under the agreement, LEQUIO PHARMA and Interprotein will collaborate to assess the potential of curcumin as an anti-COVID-19 drug and identify a novel anti-COVID-19 drug candidate from curcumin analogs/derivatives, combining LEQUIO PHARMA's enriched knowledges and experiences on curcumin and Interprotein's platform technology, AI-guided INTENDD®.

**About curcumin:**

Curcumin has been reported to possess variety of pharmacological activities including anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant effects. Recently, it has been suggested that curcumin might improve the symptoms of COVID-19 patients by inhibiting 3CLpro (main protease) activity and/or S-protein-ACE2 interaction of SARS-CoV-2.

**About LEQUIO PHARMA:**

LEQUIO PHARMA is a drug discovery venture founded in 1991 and headquartered in Naha, Okinawa. In 2005, the new drug "Zione Injection" for sclerotherapy of internal hemorrhoid was launched under the collaboration with Mitsubishi Pharma Corporation (currently Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma Corporation). It is the first new drug developed by a venture in Japan. After that, LEQUIO PHARMA focused on the various pharmacological activities of curcumin, a polyphenol found in turmeric, and developed supplements containing curcumin based on its scientific evidence.

<https://www.lequio-pha.co.jp/en/index.html>

**About Interprotein:**

Interprotein is conducting drug discovery research of small molecule medicines and conformationally-constrained therapeutic peptides based on an AI-introduced activity prediction system, AI-guided INTENDD® (INTerprotein's Engine for New Drug Design) and HLHP (Helix-Loop-Helix Peptide) technology, respectively. AI-guided INTENDD® enables to precisely predict activities of small molecule ligands based on 3D structures of drug target proteins and the ligands. Interprotein is comprehensively putting effort into the treatment for COVID-19 through NKG2A inhibition by HLHP as well as 3CLpro inhibition by drug repurposing and NCEs.

<http://www.interprotein.com/>

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