Innovatie Attaché Tokio

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LifeLines Biobank Visits Japan

Dutch title
Japan maakt kennis met Nederlandse Biobank

Dutch summary
Het promoten van de Nederlandse expertise op het terrein van biobanking en Big Data in Health bij academische partners en Japanse bedrijven. Dat was de inzet van een vijfdaags missie naar Japan door het Groningse Lifelines, eind februari 2015.

LifeLines is een grootschalig populatiecohort en biobank met data en lichaamsmateriaal van ruim 167.000 deelnemers (www.lifelines.nl). LifeLines is gefinancierd uit publieke middelen, met de opdracht voor toekomstige financiering ook (internationale) bedrijven te interesseren. Het programma bestond uit een tweedaagse wetenschappelijke conferentie; een ‘uitverkocht’ seminar op de Nederlandse ambassade in Tokio met ruim 50 deelnemers uit het bedrijfsleven en onderzoek; en verschillende bedrijfsbezoeken (hightech-matchmaking) met medewerkers van de ambassade (Innovatieraad/NFIA). Daarbij veel concrete interesse in de data, samples en de expertise van lifelines, alsmede leads voor gezamenlijke kennisontwikkeling.

Summary
LifeLines is multidimensional cohort study and biobank possessing a unique data to be used for the study of healthy ageing all over the world. Chief Scientific Officer and Chair of the Scientific Board, Prof. Ronald Stolk and Senior Consultant Biobanking, Mr. Bart Scheerder visited Japan from February 23 to February 27, 2015. First they attended the meeting, ‘The Learning Health System & Tohoku Medical Information Highway’ in Sendai from February 23 to February 27, 2015. Prof. Stolk made a presentation at the seminar, ‘Effective use of biobanks and cohort study in Japan and the Netherlands’, held at the Embassy of the Netherlands in Tokyo, Japan on February 25. Nearly 50 people attended the seminar and had chances to talk with speakers and with attendees themselves.

Details
LifeLines* is multidimensional cohort study and biobank and plays an important role in the Healthy Ageing approach of the University Medical Center Groningen. Chief Scientific Officer and Chair of the Scientific Board, Prof. Ronald Stolk and Senior Consultant Biobanking, Mr. Bart Scheerder visited Japan from February 23 to February 27, 2015. Then, they
moved to Tokyo to have a seminar at the Embassy of the Netherlands in Japan and to visit several companies and a research institute.

The seminar at the Embassy caught a lot of attention from academia, private companies, Japanese biobanks as well as scientific media and industry associations. The audience reached almost 50, which was not usual for a small meeting with only two speakers. Prof. Stolk talked about ‘Dutch Big Data in Biobanking’ at the seminar by explaining what biobank is, how to collect biosamples and questions from volunteers, how to store high-quality biosamples and how to use them for the R&D. Since there is not a general practitioner system in Japan, audience were interested in how to recruit the participants and how to keep them in the projects. In addition, some pharmaceutical companies are interested in the characteristics of participant population of the northern region of the Netherlands. Another presenter of the seminar was Dr. Koh Furuta of National Cancer Center Hospital** and he talked about ‘Standardization and Quality Management of Biobanks’ from the point of view of clinical examination by using examples. Also, he talked about the importance of the international standardization of biosamples, which would be important for global R&D.

In Tokyo, LifeLines visited various types of companies and one institute. Easy access to the high quality biosamples and data from a large population of healthy people, the possibility to customize additional data, relatively inexpensive fee, and consulting with Research Office of LifeLines caught positive attention from the companies they visited.

Dr. Furuta, presenter of the seminar, got interest in LifeLines when he attended the meeting in Europe several years ago. It is hoped that participants of the seminar at the Embassy of this time also get interest in LifeLines. In the future, working together between the Netherlands and Japan as Prof. Stolk and Dr. Furuta made the successful seminar of this time would happen.

* https://www.lifelines.nl/home

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