

## Japanese professor among 2017 Gairdner medical prize laureates

- 1) WASHINGTON – Japanese professor Akira Endo will be one of this year’s Canada Gairdner Award laureates for his discovery of statins, an achievement that led to the development of cholesterol-lowering medicines, the award’s foundation said Tuesday.
- 2) Endo, 83, a distinguished professor emeritus at Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, discovered statins when he was working as a researcher for pharmaceutical-maker Sankyo Co., the predecessor of Daiichi Sankyo Co.
- 3) His discovery and development of statins “have transformed the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease,” the foundation said in a statement.
- 4) Previous Japanese winners of the Gairdner prize, awarded for medical discoveries, include 54-year-old Kyoto University professor Shinya Yamanaka, who developed iPS cells, and Satoshi Omura, the 81-year-old Kitasato University professor emeritus who discovered and helped develop therapies to fight tropical infections.
- 5) Both also won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.【Kyodo | 2017-03-29】

### **Scientist’s discovery gave heart-disease patients a new lease on life**



6) Today, cholesterol-lowering statins are among the most widely used pharmaceutical drugs around the world and are credited with saving countless people from heart disease and stroke.

7) Akira Endo, a Japanese scientist, discovered the first statin in 1973 after examining about 6,000 fungi culture extracts. Dr. Endo was looking for a specific agent that could inhibit a key enzyme involved in cholesterol synthesis. He discovered ML-236B, also known as compactin or mevastatin, which effectively lowers “bad” low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol. The discovery would eventually prompt major pharmaceutical companies to produce cholesterol-lowering statins. Some of the most well-known on the market today include atorvastatin, sold under the brand name Lipitor, and rosuvastatin, sold under the Crestor brand name.

- 8) “I am deeply moved,” Dr. Endo said by telephone about the award. “Millions of people extended their lives through statin therapy. I’m very happy to know that.”
- 9) He said he became interested in pursuing cholesterol-lowering agents when he was working in New York City in the late 1960s and learned that heart attacks were the No. 1 cause of death in the United States, while stroke was the top killer in Japan.
- 10) Joseph Goldstein, chairman of the department of molecular genetics at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, who won a Nobel Prize for his work on cholesterol and statins, said Dr. Endo’s work paved the way for the development of a new class of drugs that saves thousands of lives a year. 【The Globe and Mail より抜粋】 *new lease on(米 of)life 寿命が延びる事、立ち直り、元気になること*

#### ★Ice breaker for active discussion

1. Have you ever heard about this drug before? Please share what you know.
2. How significant is the discovery of statin by Mr. Endo?
3. What factors do you have to take into consideration when taking drugs?
4. Are you particular about your cholesterol level? What do you do to keep it low?
5. Make sentences using the following words: laureate, distinguished, discovery, pharmaceutical and synthesis.