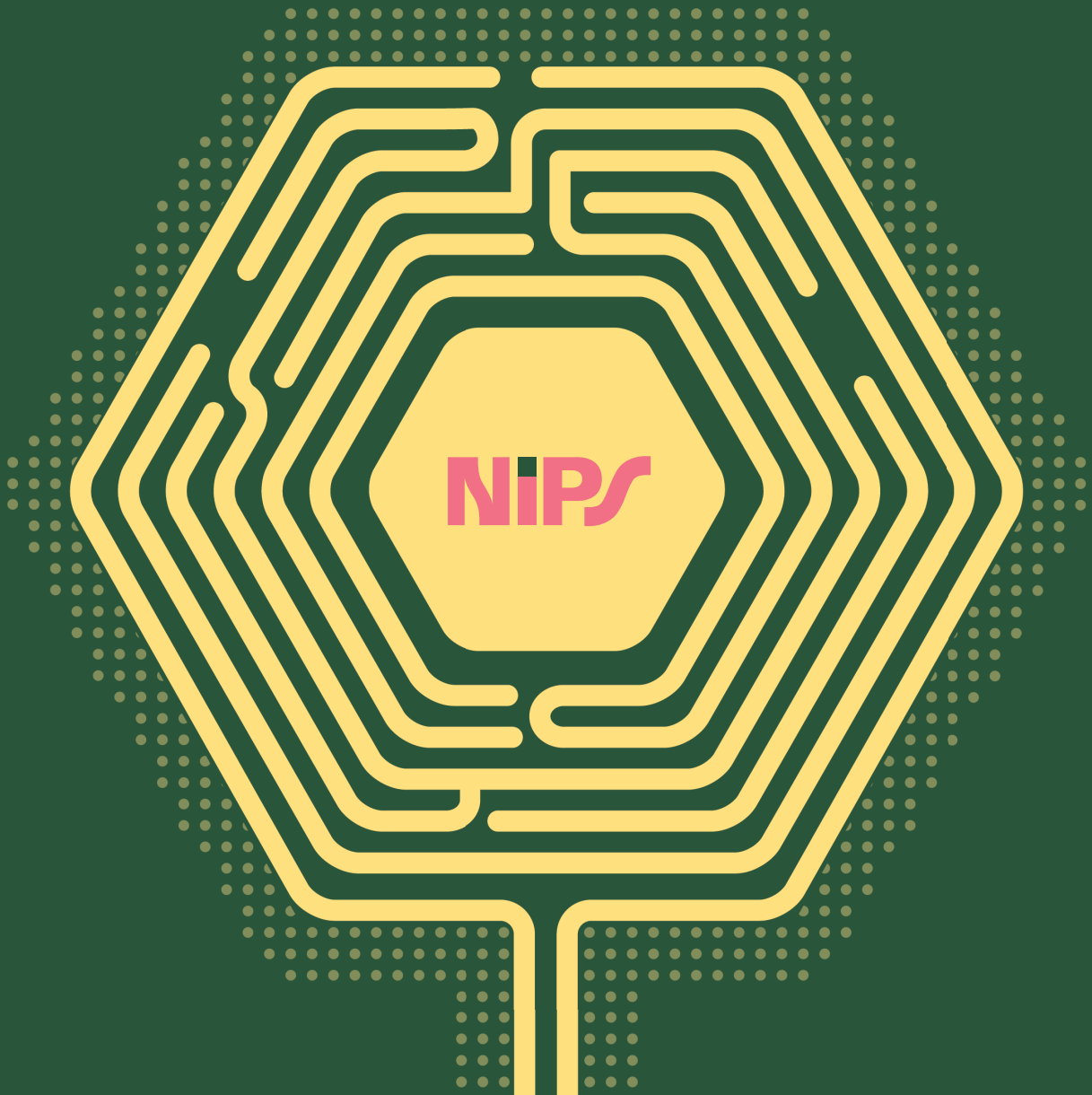
National Institutes of Natural Sciences

National Institute for Physiological Sciences 2025



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INTRODUCTION

The National Institute for Physiological Sciences (NIPS) is an inter-university research institute focusing on research and education to understand human physiology. NIPS promotes collaborative studies amongst both National and International researchers and organizations to together help understand body functions and their mechanisms. Research at NIPS also provides further understanding of the fundamental mechanisms causing diseases, to enable new and improved treatments for these diseases and their symptoms.

A major focus of current research at NIPS is to understand the brain. Most developed in humans among all creatures, the brain is critical for how we detect, respond and adapt to our environment, through the processes of sensation, motor control, learning and memory. However, the brain also directs our individual behaviors and desires, and how we communicate with each other socially through language and emotions. Furthermore, the brain also interacts with our visceral organ systems to regulate body homeostasis. Research at NIPS also aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of body homeostasis through our research on the interaction between the immune system and brain, on the regulation of the cardiovascular system, on whole body and cellular metabolism, and on how we regulate our biological defenses against damage and pathogens. NIPS strives to advance our understanding of brain function and body homeostasis, from the molecular, cellular, organ, whole body and society levels. We provide and develop cutting-edge research technology, including computational and mathematical approaches, to achieve these strategic goals. In addition, in cooperation with the Institute for Molecular Sciences at Okazaki, a leading institute on material and chemical sciences, we are striving to establish an innovative interdisciplinary research field “Spine Life Science”.

The NIPS advocates the following three major missions.

The first mission of NIPS is to conduct cutting-edge research in the physiological sciences across various levels, from the molecular and cellular through to organ systems, and to integrate this multi-level information to understand homeostasis in the living body. As research in life sciences has become diversified and “translatable”, NIPS aims to conduct world-leading research focused on the basic medical sciences, especially physiology and brain sciences. The application and development of novel and rigorous basic research techniques necessary to answer fundamental questions is also part of our mission.

The second mission of NIPS is to play the role of a research hub. NIPS conducts collaborations with scientists at universities and research institutes to further strengthen and enhance research expertise in Japan at a leading global level. To achieve this goal NIPS also encourages collaborations with foreign researchers, and we provide and develop specialized and cutting-edge research techniques and equipment to facilitate these collaborations. NIPS provides advanced devices such as electron and laser microscopy for subcellular and cellular imaging, through to 7T MRI for whole body human imaging, as well as transgenic animal and viral vector resources. NIPS also supports advanced research workshops in various fields to help establish and support research collaborations and discussions to advance the sharing of knowledge. Through these activities NIPS is a hub for domestic and international research communities to intercommunicate and support each other. In 2023, a new high gradient 3T MRI, the first machine in Japan, has been installed at NIPS. Although the budget for equipment at this facility remains extremely tight, the introduction of an 11.7-T small-animal MRI and an OPM-MEG system has been approved for the 2024 fiscal year, with installation planned by 2025. Furthermore, the renovation of Animal Experiment Facility Building II on the Myodaiji Campus is also scheduled for completion in 2025. Moving forward, we will continue to strive for the introduction and upgrading of new equipment and facilities. At the same time, we continue to maintain and provide fundamental experimental technologies such as electrophysiological techniques. At present, NIPS participates in a number of programs as their core organizations, such as Japan-US Brain Research Cooperative Program, Advanced Bioimaging Support and Brain/MINS2.0. Furthermore, in the 2025 fiscal year, we will also participate in the "Regional Core and Distinctive Research University Enhancement Program (J-PEAKS)" in collaboration with Fujita Health University and Ritsumeikan University.

In 2023, the restriction on research activity due to Covid-19 was removed and joint research, such as NIPS workshop and collaboration, has quickly recovered. We will promote efficient joint research by employing DX.

The third mission of NIPS is to provide advanced and thorough education for young scientists. NIPS is responsible for the 5-year PhD course in physiological sciences of SOKENDAI (The Graduate University for Advanced Studies). NIPS also provides further education for graduate students and young researchers from other universities and industries in Japan and internationally, through various research training programs that include the annual NIPS Training Course and via NIPS Internships as well as the training course for researchers in industry.

To understand human body functions and to apply our extended knowledge to support human life is our ultimate goal. NIPS will make every effort to open our institute to every research community that can work together with us towards this goal. For this purpose, your understanding and support is appreciated.

MD, PhD, Director General

ISA, Tadashi

1985 Graduated from Faculty of Medicine, the University of Tokyo. 1989 Completed the doctoral course of Graduate School of Medical Science, the University of Tokyo. 1988-1990 Visiting Scientist, University of Göteborg, Sweden. 1989-1993 Assistant Professor, Institute for Brain Research, the University of Tokyo. 1993-1995 Lecturer & Associate Professor, Gunma University School of Medicine. 1996-2015 Professor, the National Institute for Physiological Sciences. 2015 Professor, Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine. 2022 Dean, Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine. 2025 Director General, the National Institute for Physiological Sciences.

Outlines of Institute

National Institute for Physiological Sciences (NIPS) is an Inter-university Research Institute for research and education on human physiology. NIPS researchers are investigating human body and brain functions as well as their mechanisms through joint studies with domestic and foreign scientists, and providing specialized techniques and large-scale equipment for shared use as well as education and training for graduate students and young scientists.

Organization

NAOJ, NIFS, NIBB, NIPS and IMS were reorganized into NINS by reason of enforcement of the National University Corporation Law.
The NIPS currently comprises 4 departments, 15 divisions, 4 centers, 19 sections, Research Enhancement Strategy Office and Technical Division.

Joint Research

As an inter-university research institute, NIPS conducts collaborative research based on proposals from domestic and foreign physiological scientists. Applications from domestic and foreign scientists are reviewed and controlled by the Inter-University ad hoc committee.

Graduate Programs

The NIPS carries out two graduate programs.

1.Graduate University for Advanced Studies

The NIPS is in charge of Physiological Sciences Program of Graduate Institute for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI. The University provides 2 courses, 5-year Doctor Course and 3-year Doctor Course (transfer admission after master's course completion). The degree conferred on graduation is Doctor of Philosophy.

2.Graduate Student Training Program

Graduate students enrolled in other universities and institutes are trained to conduct researches for fixed periods of time under the supervision of NIPS professors and associate professors.

Exchange Programs

To activate international collaborations among physiological scientists in the Institute and foreign organizations, scientist exchange programs are conducted.

System management

Administrative Council, Education and Research Council and Executive Meeting are established at NINS to inspect significant matters of management, education, research and administration.
Advisory Committee for Research and Management in NIPS advises the Director-General on important matters in management of the Institute.

Administration

Administration of the institutes is managed at Okazaki Administration Center of NINS.

A Short History of the Institute

In 1960, many physiologists affiliated with the Physiological Society of Japan initiated a discussion on how to establish a central research institute for physiological sciences in this country.

In recent years, remarkable progress has been made in the life sciences throughout the world, particularly in the fields of molecular biology, cellular biology and physiology, and in areas concerning information processing and regulatory systems of higher animals. In view of these developments, there was a consensus among physiologists in Japan that a new type of research organization must be created, in parallel with the laboratories in universities, to pursue new approaches in the life sciences.

Through discussions among the physiologists, the following characteristies of such a new institute were considered to be of utmost importance.

1. Investigators from different fields should be able to collaborate on research projects in the life sciences with minimal restrictions.
2. Research communication among scientists from many fields should be closely coordinated.
3. Specialized, large-scale equipment required for multidisciplinary research, not routinely available in smaller laboratories of educational institutions, should be accessible, and proper training and maintenance should be provided. A Committee for the Foundation of a Physiological Institute was organized by Drs. MOTOKAWA K., KATSUKI Y., NATORI R., TOKIZANE T., INOUE A., UCHIZONO K., and many other leading physiologists in 1965. Thereafter, in order to establish such an institute, considerable effort was made by scientists and related government officials.

   The following time table describes the history leading to the foundation of the Institute:

Nov., 1967

The Science Council of Japan officially advised the then Prime Minister, SATO Eisaku, that the establishment of an institute for Physiological Sciences was important, and urgently necessary for the promotion of life sciences in Japan.

The Science Council of the Monbusho （the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture） reported to the Minister of Education, Science and Culture that two institutes for scientific research of biological sciences, namely, the Institute for Physiological Sciences and the Institute for Basic Biology, should be established as early as possible.

May, 1976

The Preparing Office and the Research Council for the establishment of Institutes for Biological Sciences were opened in the Monbusho.

May, 1977

The Institute for Physiological Sciences （Director-General: Prof. UCHIZONO K.） was officially established which, together with the Institute for Basic Biology, constituted the National Center for Biological Sciences （President: Prof. KATSUKI Y.）. Constituents of the Institute for Physiological Sciences at the time of inauguration were as follows.

Department of molecular physiology
  Division of Ultrastructure Research
Department of Cell physiology
  Division of Membrane Biology
Department of Information physiology
  *Division of Neurobiology and Behavioral Genetics
Special Facilities for Physiological Research
  Technical Division

Apr., 1978

In the second year the following laboratories were added:

Department of Molecular physiology
  *Division of Intracellular Metabolism
Department of Information physiology
  Division of Neural Information
Department of Biological Control System
  Division of Neural Control

Apr., 1979

In the third year the following laboratories were added:

Department of Cell physiology
  Division of Correlative Physiology
  *Division of Active Transport
Department of Biological Control System
  *Division of Cognitive Neuroscience

Apr., 1980

The following were added in the fourth year:

Department of Information physiology
  Division of Humoral Information

*Division of Learning and Memory Research
Research Facilities
Division of Experimental Animals

Apr., 1981

A new organization, Okazaki National Research Institutes, comprised of three independent institutes (Institute for Molecular Science, Institute for Physiological Sciences, and Institute for Basic Biology) was established. Previously, these institutes had been managed independently. However, on 14 Apr. 1981, they were administratively amalgamated into one organization, and thereafter referred to collectively as the Okazaki National Research Institutes.

Apr., 1982

The following was added:
Department of Molecular physiology
Division of Neurochemistry

Apr., 1984

The following was added:
Department of Biological Control System
Division of System Neurophysiology

Apr., 1985

Prof. EBASHI S. was elected the Director-General of the Institute.

Oct., 1988

The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, SOKENDAI was founded and in the Institute the School of Life Sciences, Department of Physiological Sciences was established.

Jun., 1990

The following were added:
Department of Integrative Physiology
Sensory and Motor Function Research Project
Higher Brain Function Project
*Autonomic Function Research Project

Dec., 1991

Prof. HAMA K. was elected the Director-General of the Institute.

Apr., 1997

Prof. SASAKI K. was elected the Director-General of the Institute.

Apr., 1998

The following were added:
Department of Cerebral Research
Division of Cerebral Structure
Division of Cerebral Circuitry
Division of Cerebral Integration

A part of facilities in the complex of Physiological Research Facilities was reformed to the Center for Brain Experiment.

Apr., 2000

Division of Experimental Animals was transferred to the Research Facilities as shown below. Center for Integrative Bioscience

- Department of Strategic Methodology
- Department of Development, Differentiation and Regeneration
- Department of Bio-Environmental Science

Research Center for Computational Science
Center for Experimental Animals
Center for Radioisotope Facilities

Apr., 2003

Prof. MIZUNO N. was elected the Director-General of the Institute.
The following were added:
Department of Developmental Physiology
Division of Behavioral Development
Division of Homeostatic Development
Division of Reproductive/Endocrine Development
Division of Adaptation Development

Apr., 2004

Established National Institutes of Natural Sciences (NINS).
National Astronomical Observatory of Japan (NAOJ), National Institute for Fusion Science (NIFS), National Institute for Basic Biology (NIBB), National Institute for Physiological Sciences (NIPS) and Institute for Molecular Science (IMS) were integrated and reorganized into NINS by reason of enforcement of the National University Corporation Law.
In NIPS, Division of Neurochemistry in Department of Molecular Physiology was renamed to Division of Biophysics and Neurobiology, Division of Humoral Information in Department of Information Physiology was renamed to Division of Neural Signaling, Department of Biological Control System was renamed to Department of Integrative Physiology, Division of Cognitive Neuroscience was renamed to Division of Computational Neuroscience, and Center for Integrative Bioscience was renamed to Okazaki Institute for Integrative Bioscience, respectively.
The Administration Bureau turned into Okazaki Administration Office of NINS.

Nov., 2005

Division of Neurobiology and Behavioral Genetics was

reformed to the Center for Genetic Analysis of Behavior.

Apr., 2007

Prof. OKADA Y. was elected the Director-General of the Institute.

The following were added:

- Department of Molecular Physiology
  - Division of Nano-Structure Physiology
- Department of Cell Physiology
  - Division of Cell Signaling
- Department of Information Physiology
  - Division of Developmental Neurophysiology

Apr., 2008

Division of Active Transport in Department of Cell Physiology was renamed to Division of Neural Systematics.

The following were abolished:

- Division of Learning and Memory Research
- Center for Brain Experiment

The following were added:

- Center for Multidisciplinary Brain Research
- Supportive Center for Brain Research
- Center for Communication Networks

Apr., 2009

Division of Intracellular Metabolism was abolished.

Apr., 2011

The following was added:

- Section of Health and Safety Management

Apr., 2013

Prof. IMOTO K. was elected the Director-General of the Institute.

Oct., 2013

Research Enhancement Strategy Office was established.

Jan., 2014

The following were added:

- Department of Information Physiology
  - Division of Cardiocirculatory Signaling
- Center for Multidisciplinary Brain Research
  - Research Strategy for Brain Sciences Office

Apr., 2014

Division of Developmental Neurophysiology in Department of Information Physiology was renamed to Division of Visual Information Processing.

The following were abolished:

- Department of Molecular Physiology
  - Division of Nano-Structure Physiology
- Department of Cell physiology
  - Division of Correlative Physiology
- Center for Communication Networks
  - Section of Communications and Public Liaison

Apr., 2016

The following were abolished :

- Department of Molecular Physiology
- Department of Cell Physiology
- Department of Information Physiology
- Department of Integrative Physiology
- Department of Cerebral Research
- Department of Developmental Physiology
- Center for Multidisciplinary Brain Research
- Division of Computational Neuroscience
- Division of Adaptation Development

The following were renamed :

- Division of Cerebral Structure to Division of Cell Structure
- Division of Sensori-Motor Integration to Division of Integrative Physiology
- Division of Homeostatic Development to Division of Homeostatic Development

The following were added :

- Department of Molecular and Cellular Physiology
  - Division of Biophysics and Neurobiology
  - Division of Neurobiology and Bioinformatics
  - Division of Membrane Physiology
  - Division of Neural Systematics
  - Division of Neural Development and Regeneration
- Department of Homeostatic Regulation
  - Division of Cell Structure
  - Division of Cell Signaling
  - Division of Cardiocirculatory Signaling
  - Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism
- Department of Fundamental Neuroscience
  - Division of Neural Signaling
  - Division of Cerebral Circuitry
  - Division of Homeostatic Development
  - Division of Visual information processing
- Department of System Neuroscience
  - Division of Sensory and Cognitive Information
  - Division of Behavioral Development
  - Division of System Neurophysiology
  - Division of Integrative Physiology
  - Division of Cerebral Integration
- Center for Research Collaboration
  - Section of Collaboration Promotion
  - Section of Advanced Research Support
  - Section of Visiting Collaboration Research Project

Section of International Collaborative Research Project

Regarding Supportive Center for Brain Research, Section of Viral Vector Development and Section of Primate Model Development have reorganized to Center for Genetic Analysis of Behavior and Center for Research Collaboration, respectively. Section of Primate Model Development has been renamed to NBR Project.
Section of Evaluation and Collaboration in Center for Communication Networks has also been renamed to Section of Research Archives.

Mar., 2018
The following was abolished :
Okazaki Institute for Integrative Bioscience

Oct., 2018
The following were abolished:
Department of Molecular and Cellular Physiology
Division of Neural Systematics
Department of Fundamental Neuroscience
Division of Cardiocirculatory Signaling
The following was added:
Department of System Neuroscience
Division of Neural Dynamics

Apr., 2019
Prof. NABEKURA J. was elected the Director-General of the Institute.
The following were abolished:
Department of Molecular and Cellular Physiology
Division of Neurobiology and Bioinformatics
Department of System Neuroscience
Division of Sensory and Cognitive Information

The following was added:
Department of Homeostatic Regulation
Division of Ultrastructural Research
Center for Experimental Animals has also been renamed Center for Animal Resources and Collaborative Study

Oct., 2019
The following was abolished:
Department of System Neuroscience
Division of Integrative Physiology
The following was added:
Department of Fundamental Neuroscience
Division of Biophotonics

Apr., 2021
The following was abolished:
Department of Fundamental Neuroscience
Division of Cerebral Circuitry
The following were added:
Department of Molecular & Cellular Physiology
Division of Structural Biology
Supportive Center for Brain Research
Section of Cellular Electrophysiology

Section of Behavioral Patterns and Section of Metabolic Physiology in Center for Genetic Analysis of Behavior were merged and Section of Multilayer Physiology was established.

Sep., 2021
The following were added:
Department of Fundamental Neuroscience
Division of Multicellular Circuit Dynamics
Department of System Neuroscience
Division of Sensory and Cognitive Brain Mapping

Nov., 2021
The following was added:
Department of Homeostatic Regulation
Division of Molecular Neuroimmunology

Oct., 2022
The following was abolished:
Center for Research Collaboration
Section of Visiting Collaborative Research Project
The following was added:
Center for Research Collaboration
Section of Advanced Project Promotion

Apr., 2023
The following were abolished:
Department of System Neuroscience
Division of System Neurophysiology
Division of Cerebral Integration

Apr., 2024
The following was abolished:
Department of Molecular and Cellular Physiology
Division of Membrane Physiology
Department of Homeostatic Regulation
Division of Cell Signaling
Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism
The following were added:
Department of System Neuroscience
Division of Multisensory Integration Systems
Center for Genetic Analysis of Behavior
Section of Sensory Physiology

Jul., 2024

The following were added:

Okazaki Collaborative Platform in Okazaki Research Facilities

Okazaki Collaborative Platform in Okazaki Research Facilities

Core for Spin Life Sciences in Okazaki Collaborative Platform

Nov., 2024

The following was added:

Open Mix Lab［OML OKAZAKI］in Okazaki Collaborative Platform

Jan., 2025

The following was added:

Department of Homeostatic Regulation

Division of Mammalian Embryogenesis

Apr., 2025

Prof. ISA T. was elected the Director-General of the Institute.

The following was abolished:

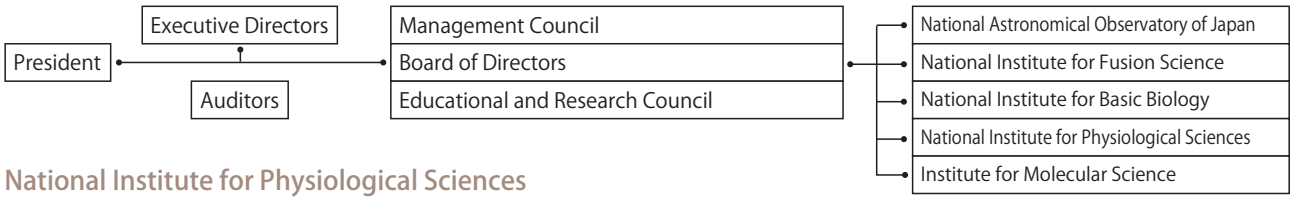
Department of Fundamental Neuroscience

Division of Homeostatic Development

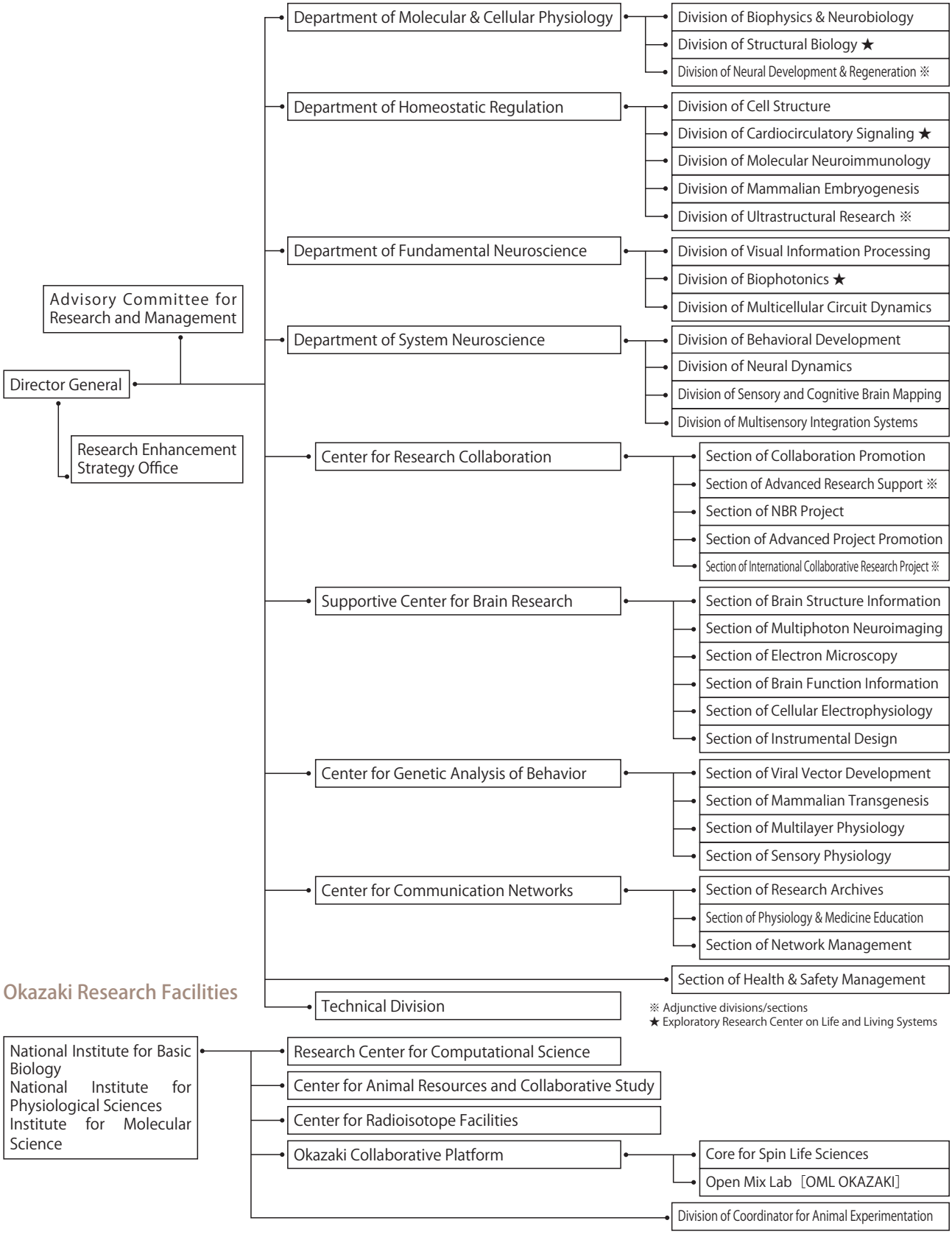
Asterisk （*） denotes adjunct divisions.

Organization of the Institute

National Institutes of Natural Sciences



National Institute for Physiological Sciences



※ Adjunctive divisions/sections
★ Exploratory Research Center on Life and Living Systems

Okazaki Research Facilities

Advisory Committee for Research and Management

Chairman ◎ , Vice-Chairman ○

Advisory Committee for Research and Management shall advise the Director-General of the Institute, upon his request, on important matters in management of the Institute.

(Outside)	
HANADA, Reiko	Professor, Oita University Faculty of Medicine
KOIZUMI, Schuichi	Professor, Department of Neuropharmacology, Interdisciplinary Graduate School of Medicine University of Yamanashi
KUBA, Hiroshi	Professor, Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine
MATSUDA, Tetsuya	Professor, Tamagawa University Brain Science Institute
○MIYATA, Mariko	Professor, Tokyo Women's Medical University School of Medicine
NISHITANI, Tomoe	Professor, Wakayama Medical University, School of Medicine
OKAMURA, Yasusi	Professor, Graduate School of Medicine, Osaka University
SAWAMOTO, Kazunobu	Director, Institute of Brain Science, Nagoya City University Graduate School of Medical Sciences
TANAKA, Masaki	Professor, Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine
YANAGISAWA, Masashi	Professor, International Institute for Integrative Sleep Medicine, University of Tsukuba
(Inside)	
◎FURUSE, Mikio	Professor, NIPS
ISODA, Masaki	Professor, NIPS
KITAJO, Keiichi	Professor, NIPS
KUBO, Yoshihiro	Professor, NIPS
NEMOTO, Tomomi	Professor, NIPS
NISHIDA, Motohiro	Professor, NIPS
NISHIJIMA, Kazutoshi	Professor, NIPS
WAKE, Hiroaki	Professor, NIPS
YOSHIMURA,Yumiko	Professor, NIPS

Director General/Vice Director General/Chief Researcher

Director General	ISA, Tadashi
Vice Director General	KITAJO, Keiichi
Chief Chairperson	ISODA, Masaki
Chief Researcher / Chairperson for Cooperative Studies	YOSHIMURA,Yumiko
Chief Researcher / Chairperson for Animal Experiment Management	NISHIJIMA, Kazutoshi
Chief Researcher /Chairperson for Safety and Research Ethics Problems	MURATA, Kazuyoshi
Chief Researcher / Chairperson for Public Affairs and Information Management	TAKEMURA, Hiromasa
Chief Researcher / Chairperson for Educational Problem	FURUSE, Mikio

Emeritus Professors

OOMURA, Yutaka
WATANABE, Akira
MORI, Shigemi
KANEKO, Akimichi
MIZUNO, Noboru
NAGAYAMA, Kuniaki
OKADA, Yasunobu
OHMORI, Harunori
KOMATSU, Hidehiko
IMOTO, Keiji
KAKIGI, Ryusuke
KAWAGUCHI, Yasuo
SADATO, Norihiro
NAMBU, Atsushi
TOMINAGA, Makoto
MINOKOSHI, Yasuhiko
NABEKURA, Junichi

Deceased Emeritus Professors

IRISAWA, Hiroshi
UCHIZONO, Koji
EBASHI, Setsuro
KATSUKI, Yasuji
KUNO, Motoy
HAMA, Kiyoshi
TSUKAHARA, Nakaakira
YANAIHARA, Noboru
WATARI, Hiroshi
SASAKI, Kazuo
IKENAKA, Kazuhiro
YAMAGISHI, Shunichi
OBATA, Kunihiko

Deceased Emeritus Technical Staff

OHIRA, Hitoo

Division of Biophysics and Neurobiology

KUBO, Yoshihiro
Professor
Biophysics
Neurobiology

TATEYAMA, Michihiro
Associate Professor
Pharmacology
Physiology

SHIMOMURA, Takushi
Assistant Professor
Molecular Physiology
Biophysics

Functioning mechanisms and dynamic structure- function relationship of ion channels, receptors and G proteins

Ion channels, receptors and G proteins play critical roles for the excitability and its regulation of neurons. We focus on these molecules which enable brain function. From the biophysical point of view, we study structure-function relationships, regulation mechanisms and dynamic structural rearrangements of ion channels and receptors. We also study the functional significance of specific features of ion channels and receptors in the brain function by making gene manipulated mice and by studying their abnormalities in the synaptic transmission and whole animal behavior.

Our experiments start with constructions of mutants, molecular chimeras and fluorescent tagged molecules of ion channels and receptors. We express them in heterologous expression systems such as Xenopus oocytes or HEK293T cells. We then analyze the functional features and dynamic structural rearrangements by electrophysiological method such as two electrode voltage clamp and patch clamp. We also use optophysiologial methods such as Ca^{2+} imaging, FRET analysis under total internal reflection microscope, subunit counting by single molecule imaging, and voltage clamp fluorometry using fluorescent unnatural amino acid.

Major target molecules are Two pore Na^{+} channel (TPC), Two pore K^{+} channel, G protein coupled inward rectifier K^{+} channel (GIRK), ATP receptor channel P2X2, Sigma-1 receptor and various G protein coupled receptors including an orphan receptor Prrt3. We also work, as cooperative research projects, on TRP channels, Opsin, as well as various ion channel toxins.

One of the characteristic features of our experimental approaches is that we utilize in vitro expression systems such as Xenopus oocytes which enable clarification of the observation targets, high through-put recordings and precise biophysical analyses by the two-electrode voltage clamp method. Another is that we perform simultaneous recordings of electrophysiology and optophysiology to approach the dynamic aspects of the function and structural rearrangements, which is beneficial towards the understanding of the functioning images. Taking advantages of these facilities and methodologies, we would like to promote our research as well as cooperative research projects further.

* Liu C, Chen IS, Barri M, Murrell-Lagnado R, Kubo Y (2024) J Biol Chem 300: 108006.
* Tsukamoto H, Kubo Y (2023) Proc Natl Acad Sci USA 120 : e2301269120.
* Tateyama M, Kubo Y (2023) PLoS One 18 : e0284962.
* Shimomura T, Hirazawa K, Kubo Y (2023) Proc Natl Acad Sci USA120 : e2209569120.
* Chen IS, Eldstrom J, Fedida D, Kubo Y (2022) J Physiol 600: 603-62.

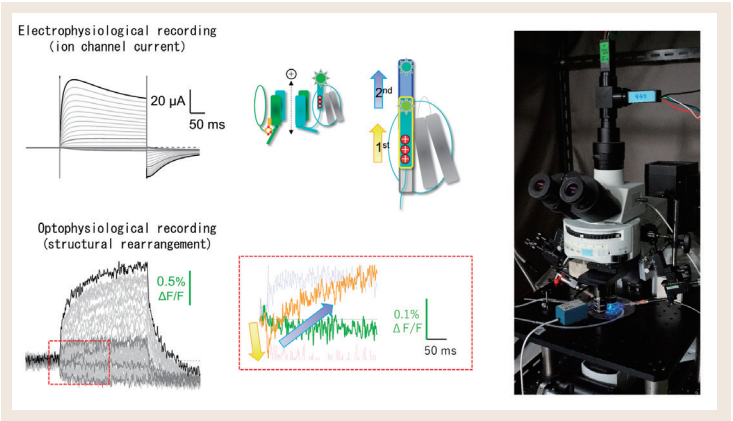
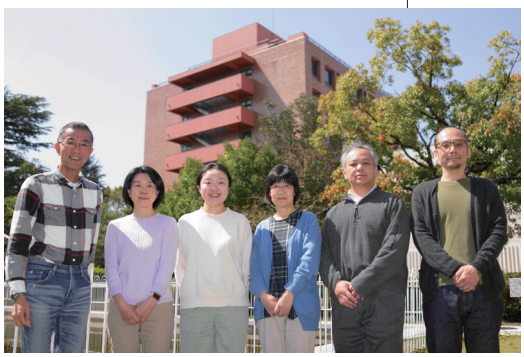


Fig. 1. Analyses of the function and dynamic structural rearrangements of TPC3 channel by simultaneous recordings of electrophysiology and optophysiology under voltage clamp using Xenopus oocyte expression systems. (Shimomura T, Hirazawa K, Kubo Y (2023) Proc Natl Acad Sci USA)



Division of Structural Biology

Material-Life Boundary Research Group, Exploratory Research Center on Life and Living Systems

MURATA, Kazuyoshi
Project Professor
Structural biology
Electron Microscopy

Raymond Burton-Smith
Project Assistant Professor
Biochemistry
Electron microscopy

Structural biology by cryo-electron microscopy

Living organisms are formed by biomolecules such as proteins, and are maintained by chemical reactions induced by these. In our research group, we use a technique called cryo-electron microscopy to study the structure of these biomolecules and explore the question "What is life?" at the molecular level.

Cryo-electron microscopy (Cyo-EM) is a method in which biological samples are rapidly frozen and directly observed under an electron microscope. This makes it possible to reveal the structure of biomolecules at the molecular level at near-native condition.

The main research equipment includes a 300kV cryo-EM (TITAN Krios G4, TFS) for high-resolution image acquisition (Fig. 1, left), a 200kV cryo-EM (JEM2200FS, JEOL) for grid screening (Fig. 1, center), and a cryo-FIB SEM as tomography specimen preparation device (Aquilos2, TFS) (Fig. 1, right).

The high-resolution images obtained by these cryo-electron microscopes are analyzed by single particle analysis (SPA) and tomography using high-performance computers to reconstruct the three-dimensional structure of biomolecules.

Fig. 2 shows the structure of the giant virus "Medusavirus" with and without genomic DNA, as revealed by SPA using these cryo-EM (Watanabe et al., 2024). This result has revealed part of the process of virus particle formation.

We welcome the participation of young researchers and graduate students who are interested in this type of structural biology.

* Watanabe et al., J Virol 98(9), e0043624 (2024)
* Oda et al., J Mol Biol 437(2), 168875 (2024)
* Sugiyama et al., Chem Lett 53, upae192 (2024)
* Lin et al., Sci Rep 14, 14079 (2024)
* Maity et al., Biomat Sci 12(9), 2408 (2024)

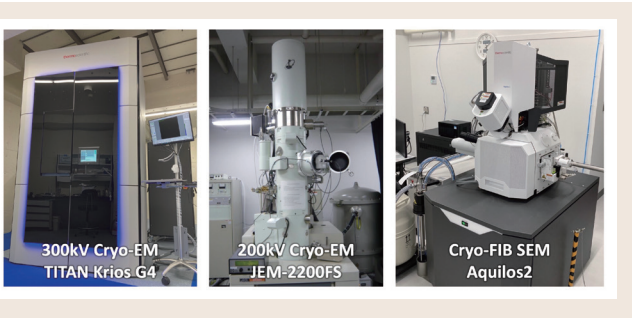


Fig. 1 300kV cryo-EM, TITAN Krios G4 (right), 200kV cryo-EM, JEM2200FS (middle), and cryo-FIB SEM (right).

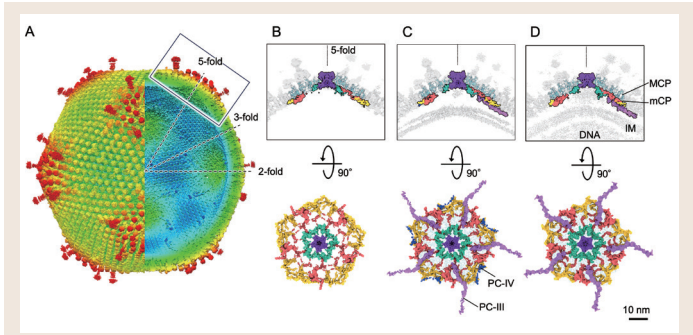
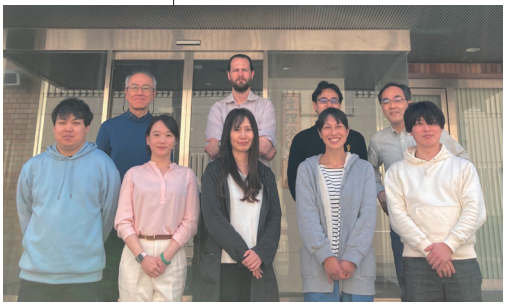


Fig. 2 Medusavirus capsid structure at 7 Å resolution. A) External structure on the left and internal structure on the right. B-D) Structural changes in capsid structure near the 5-fold axis of symmetry (box in A) during the virus particle maturation process: capsid only (B), with nuclear membrane (IM) (C), and with nuclear membrane and DNA (D).



Division of Neural Development & Regeneration

SAWAMOTO, Kazunobu
Adjunct Professor
Neuroscience
Development and
Regenerative Biology

Elucidating the Mechanisms and Significance of Neurogenesis in the Postnatal Brain

Elucidation of the intrinsic regenerative mechanisms of the brain and development of manipulation techniques

Not only during embryonic development, but also in limited areas of the brain after birth, neural stem cells are present and continuously produce new neurons. It is becoming clear that this neurogenesis is involved in brain development and homeostasis. It has also become clear that when the brain is injured, cell proliferation in neurogenic regions increases and neurons lost due to brain injury can be regenerated. Our group, in collaboration with other research divisions of National Institute for Physiological Sciences, has elucidated the migration mechanisms of new neurons by serial block surface scanning electron microscopy (SBF-SEM) and two-photon microscopy. In this research division, we aim to elucidate the mechanisms and significance of neogenesis in the postnatal brain using normal animals and animal models of brain injury, and to use these findings to develop new therapeutic strategies.

* T. Miyamoto et al., High spatial resolution gene expression profiling and characterization of neuroblasts migrating in the peri-injured cortex using photo-isolation chemistry. Front Neurosci. 7:18:1504047 (2025)
* K. Kawase et al., Significance of birth in the maintenance of quiescent neural stem cells. Sci Adv., 11(4): eadn6377 (2025)
* T. Ogino et al., Astrocytic activation increases blood flow in the adult olfactory bulb. Mol Brain 17:52 (2024)
* T. Ogino et al., Neuronal migration depends on blood flow in the adult brain. eLife 99502.1 (2024)
* M. Matsumoto et al., Neuraminidase inhibition promotes the collective migration of neurons and recovery of brain function. EMBO Mol Med 10.1038/s44321-024-00073-7. (2024)

Fig. 1 SBF-SEM reveals the fine structure of new neurons migrating in normal and injured brains (Matsumoto et al., 2024).

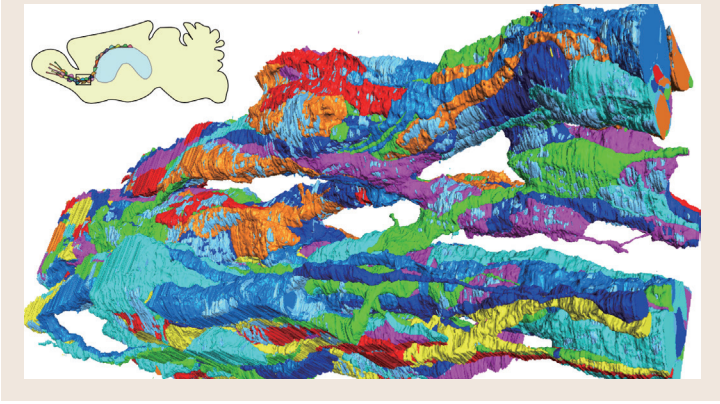
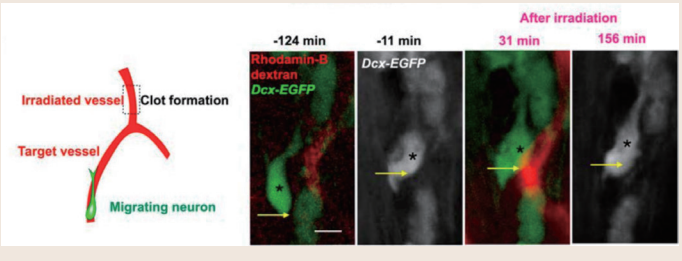


Fig. 2 Two-photon microscopy reveals that the migration of new neurons is dependent on blood flow (Ogino et al., 2024).



Division of Cell Structure

FURUSE, Mikio
Professor
Cell Biology

IZUMI, Yasushi
Associate Professor
Cell Biology

OHASHI, Masato
Assistant Professor
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Biochemistry
Developmental Biology

Molecular basis of cell-cell junctions involved in epithelial barrier function

The Epithelium separates body compartments as a barrier and selectively transports various substances, thereby contributing to organ functions and homeostasis. Our laboratory aims to clarify the molecular bases of specialized cell structures responsible for these basic roles of the epithelium. We focus on cell-cell junctions involved in the regulation of the paracellular transport (occluding junctions), including the tight junction and its related structures, and examine their molecular architectures, functions, and dynamic behavior. One of the characteristic features of our research is that we identify structural or regulatory proteins of occluding junctions and characterize their functions. We take combined approaches of molecular cell biology, physiology, and morphology, including immunoelectron and freeze-fracture replica electron microscopy, by using cultured epithelial cells and model organisms, including mice and fruit flies. The genome editing-mediated systematic loss of function experiments of relevant proteins in cultured epithelial cells is providing various new findings. The following are ongoing projects.

1. Roles of tight junction in epithelial homeostasis.
2. Molecular dissection of tricellular tight junctions and elucidation of their physiological functions.
3. Physiological functions of tight junctions and the related junctional structures *in vivo*.
4. Roles of septate junctions in intestinal barrier function and regulation of s tem cell proliferation in fruit fly.
5. Regulatory mechanisms of epithelial morphogenesis by membrane traffic

* Otani et al., J Cell Biol 218, 3372 (2019)
* Izumi et al., J Cell Sci 134: jcs257022 (2021)
* Sugawara et al., J Cell Biol 220: e202005062 (2021)
* Nguyen et al. J Cell Biol 223: e202307104 (2024)

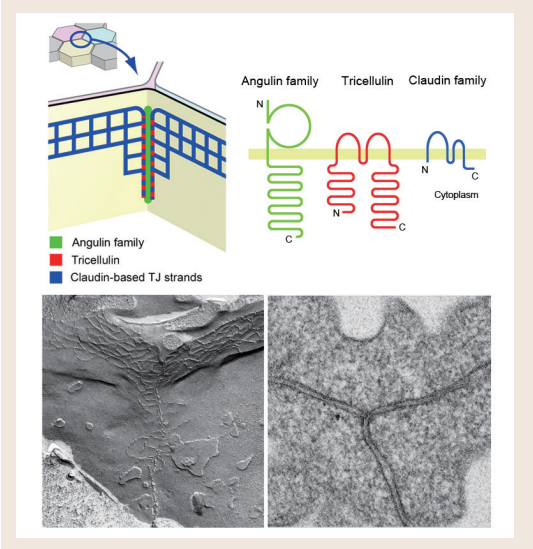

Fig. 1. Molecular architecture and morphology of tricellular tight junctions (tTJs). tTJs are specialized intercellular junctions formed at the point where vertices of three epithelial cells meet. tTJs contain membrane proteins angulin family proteins and tricellulin, and restrict the leakage of solutes through the intercellular space together with claudin-based tight junctions. The bottom shows a tTJ observed by freeze-fracture replica (left) and ultra-thin section (right) electron microscopy.

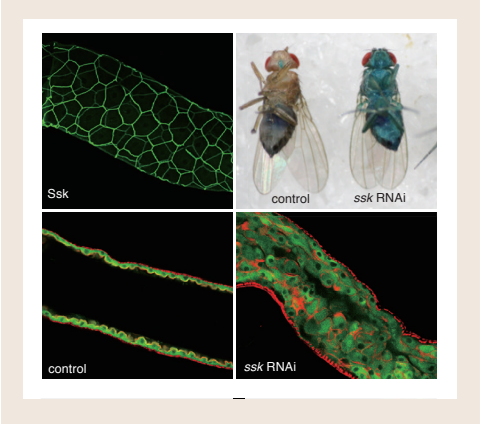

Fig. 2 Roles of smooth septate junctions in the Drosophila midgut.
When the expression of a smooth septate junction-associated membrane protein Ssk is suppressed in the adult Drosophila gut, the intestinal barrier function is impaired, leading to the leakage of blue dye from the intestinal lumen to the body cavity with overproliferation of enterocytes.

Division of Cardiocirculatory Signaling

Cardiocirculatory Dynamism Research Group, Exploratory Research Center on Life and Living Systems

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Professor
Cardiovascular Physiology

NISHIMURA, Akiyuki
Project Associate Professor
Biochemistry

Elucidation of biological functions using multilevel techniques to evaluate cardiovascular functions and its clinical application

Our cardiocirculatory function is mainly controlled by muscular organs composed of striated muscles (heart and skeletal muscles) and smooth muscle (blood vessels). Our group aims to elucidate the molecular mechanisms underlying transition of the muscles from adaptation to maladaptation against various stress (hemodynamic load and environmental stress) using multi-level techniques to evaluate cardiovascular functions (in vivo and in vitro), and work toward practical application (e.g., drug discovery and fostering). In particular, we are focusing on mitochondria, energy-producing organs, and investigating the mechanism of muscle repair and regeneration from the viewpoint of mitochondrial quality control. We aim to develop a novel therapeutic strategy for refractory diseases.

Disruption of redox (reduction/oxidation) dynamics is closely related to the onset of various diseases including cardiocirculatory diseases. We are focusing on highly reactive sulfur metabolites (supersulfides) and conducting sulfur redox biology for cardiovascular homeostasis and diseases. In addition, we address the inclusive research to elucidate the mechanism underlying maintenance and transfiguration of cardiocirculatory homeostasis via multi-organ interactions by combining non-invasive measuring methodologies of motor functions and those cardiovascular functions. Our laboratory has various techniques and equipment to drive the above researches.

* A. Nishimura et al. Nat. Commun. 16. 276 (2025)
* A. Nishimura et al. Redox Biol. 79, 103445 (2025)
* L. Zhou et al. J. Pharmacol. Sci. 155. 121-130 (2024)
* A. Nishimura et al. J. Pharmacol. Sci. 154. 127-135 (2024)
* X. Tang et al. Mar. Drugs. 21. 52 (2023)
* S. Oda et al. Nat. Commun. 13. 6374 (2022)

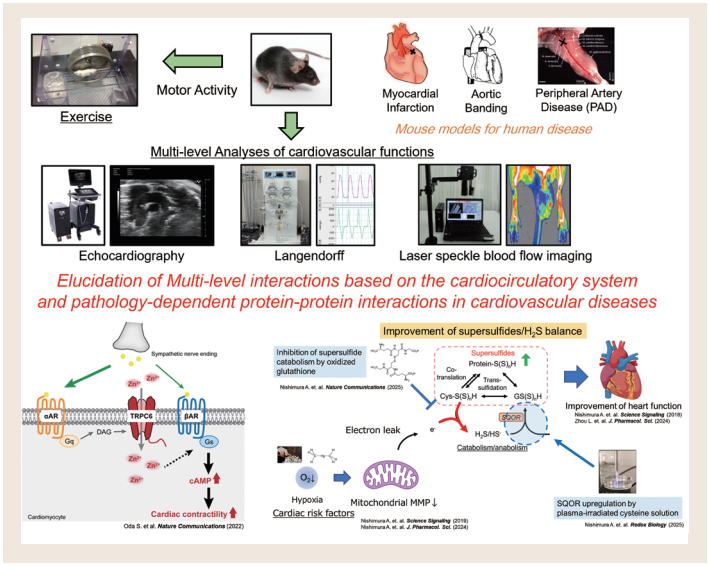

Figure. Measuring systems for cardiovascular functions and summary of our research using these systems

Division of Molecular Neuroimmunology

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Neuropathophysiology
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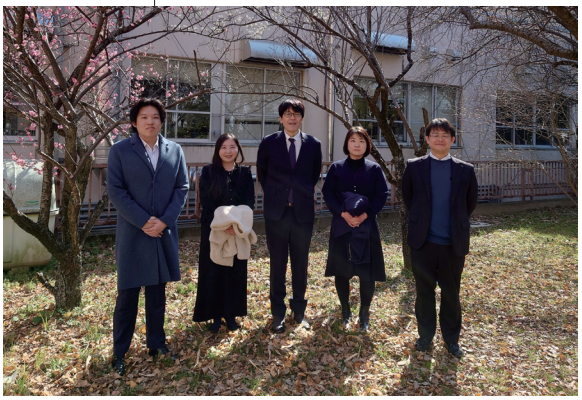
Integrated Animal Science

Discovery of new gateway reflexes

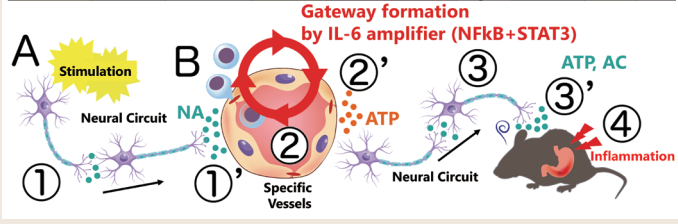
Detailed investigation of reported Gateway Reflexes

Genetic and environmental factors play significant roles in the development of autoimmune diseases. Family-based studies of autoimmune disorders have pinpointed several key genes that contribute to their onset. More recently, genome-wide association studies (GWAS) leveraging next-generation sequencing technologies have identified numerous single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) present in patients with autoimmune diseases, further elucidating the genetic underpinnings of these conditions. In addition, environmental factors such as aging, infections, and stress have been shown to exacerbate the progression of these diseases. Our research has focused on the inflammatory cytokine IL-6 and CD4+ T cells. In 2008, we identified the “IL-6 amplifier”, a molecular mechanism that initiates inflammation. The IL-6 amplifier is a hyperactivation mechanism of the NFκB signaling pathway, induced by the simultaneous activation of both IL-6-STAT3 and NFκB pathways in non-immune cells such as endothelial, fibroblastic, and exocrine cells. We demonstrated that several SNPs are linked to disease development through the IL-6 amplifier by activation of the NFκB pathway. Furthermore, in 2012, we discovered a novel neuro-immune interaction termed the "Gateway Reflex." In this process, specific neural circuits, activated by environmental stimuli, trigger the release of noradrenaline at targeted blood vessels. This, in turn, forms ‘gateways’ that allow blood immune cells to infiltrate tissues through the IL-6 amplifier, facilitating the onset of tissue-specific autoimmune diseases. To date, we have identified six distinct Gateway Reflexes, in which various external stimuli—such as gravity, pain, stress, light, intra-articular inflammation, and artificial neuronal stimulation—induce gateway formation, contributing to the development of tissue-specific inflammatory diseases (see table below). Within the Division of Molecular Neuroimmunology, we have studied these two novel concepts of tissue-specific inflammation in collaboration with the Murakami laboratories at Hokkaido University and the National Institutes for Quantum Science and Technology. Moving forward, our investigation into the Gateway Reflexes will focus on (1) identifying new Gateway Reflexes, (2) conducting a detailed analysis of the associated neural circuits, (3) examining the molecular mechanisms of gateway formation, and (4) investigating the antigen specificity of autoreactive CD4+ T cells during gateway formation.

* H. Ogura *et al*., Interleukin-17 promotes autoimmunity by triggering a positive-feedback loop via interleukin-6 induction. *Immunity* **29**, 628-636 (2008).
* Y. Arima *et al*., Regional neural activation defines a gateway for autoreactive T cells to cross the blood-brain barrier. *Cell* **148**, 447-457 (2012).
* M. Murakami, D. Kamimura, T. Hirano, Pleiotropy and Specificity: Insights from the Interleukin 6 Family of Cytokines. *Immunity* **50**, 812-831 (2019).
* R. Hasebe *et al*., ATP spreads inflammation to other limbs through crosstalk between sensory neurons and interneurons. *The Journal of experimental medicine*
* T. Yamasaki *et al*., Zoobiquity experiments show the importance of the local MMP9-plasminogen axis in inflammatory bowel diseases in both dogs and patients. *Int Immunol.* **35**, (2023). 219, (2022).



A. Stimulation	B. Immune cells	① Neural Circuits	①′ Neuro transmitter	② Gateway Sites	②′ Neuro transmitter	③ Neural Circuits	③′ Neuro transmitter	② or ④ pathology	Papers
1 Gravity	MOG-Th17	Sensory (Soleus Mus) -L5 Sympathetic G	Noradrenarine (NA)	L5 dorsal vessels				MS model	Cell (2012)
2 Electric	MOG-Th17	Sensory(quadriceps) -L3 Sympathetic G	NA	L3 dorsal vessels				MS model	Cell (2012)
3 Pain	Monocytes +MOG-Th1/Th17	Sensory-ACC-Sympathetic	NA	Spinal cord ventral vessels				Relapse of MS model	eLife (2015) JI (2023)
4 Light	IRBP-Th1/Th17	Optic nerves	NA	Retina vessels				Uveitis model	Sci Rep (2019)
5 Inflammation	various			Synovial fibroblasts	ATP	Sensory -Inter-N -Sensory (Antidromic)	ATP	RA model	JEM (2022)
6 Stress	MOG-Th1/Th17	PVN -Sympathetic	NA	Brain vessels	ATP	Nonsymp -DMH/AHP -DMX -Vagus-N	Acetylcholine (AC)	Progressive MS model	eLife (2017)



IL-6 amplifier and Gateway Reflex

Division of Mammalian Embryogenesis

KOBAYASHI, Toshihiro
Professor
Stem Cell Biology
Embryology

1. *In vitro* Gametogenesis in Various Mammals

In vitro, the generation of germ cells from pluripotent stem cells (PSCs) can crucially impact future reproductive medicine and animal breeding. A decade ago, *in vitro* gametogenesis was established in the mouse. However, the induction of primordial germ cell-like cells (PGCLCs) to produce fertile gametes had not been achieved in any other species. In addition, we demonstrated some key differences between mouse and human germline specification. In our lab, we aim to develop *in vitro* systems to induce PGCLCs in various mammals including rats and rabbits. Furthermore, by using these systems, we study the conserved or species-specific mechanisms underlying pluripotency transition, germline specification, and subsequent development.

2. *In vivo* Organ Generation via Blastocyst Complementation

The generation of human organs in model animals allows us not only to provide a disease model that reflects human disease and pathology but also to become a source for organ transplantation in future regenerative medicine. As an approach to achieve it, we have developed the "blastocyst complementation" method which can create an organ in an animal by injecting PSCs into preimplantation embryos derived from organ-deficient animals. To demonstrate the proof of principle, we previously demonstrated the successful generation of rat iPSC-derived pancreas in pancreas-deficient mice. Since then, we and others have shown the generation of kidneys, thymus, and germ cells via blastocyst complementation using mouse and rat models. In our lab, we attempt to develop novel culture systems or embryo manipulation techniques applicable for blastocyst complementation.

* K. Iwatsuki et al., Cell Rep Methods. 3, 100542 (2023).
* M. Oikawa et al., Science 376, 176 (2022).
* T. Kobayashi et al., Cell Rep. 37, 109812 (2021).
* T. Kobayashi et al., Nat Commun. 12, 1328 (2021).
* T. Kobayashi et al., Nature 546, 416 (2017).
* T. Kobayashi et al., Cell 142, 787 (2010).

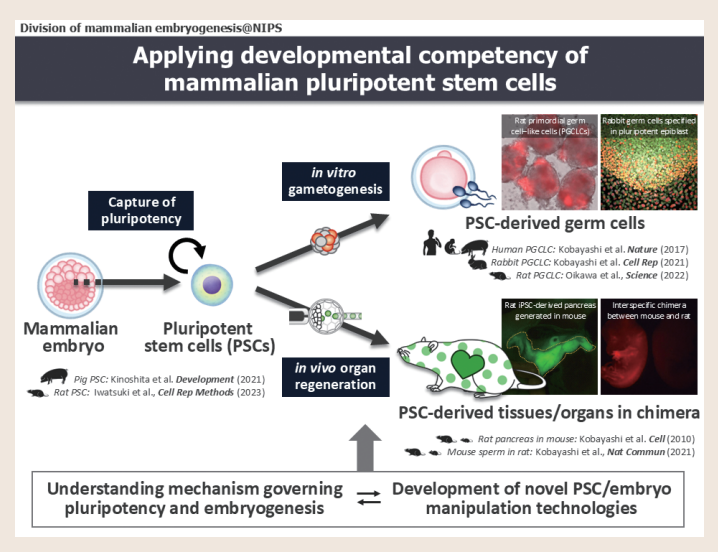


Fig. Overview of our research. Our lab aims to understand mechanisms underlying the cell fate decisions in early mammalian embryos and to apply their principle for future reproductive and regenerative medicine. In particular, we use pluripotent stem cells and early embryos from various mammals, which will enable us to investigate conserved mechanisms among the mammals and to develop novel technology by the use of species-specific features.

Division of Ultrastructural Research

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Anatomy
Neuroscience
Cell biology

Ultrastructural analyses with electron microscopic 3D reconstruction
Regulatory mechanisms and roles of mitochondrial dynamics in myelin diseases

Our goal is to understand structural changes in biological phenomena including development, functional maintenance and pathophysiology of the nervous system, and elucidate their molecular mechanisms and roles. We utilize various imaging approaches including 3D ultrastructural analyses with serial block-face scanning electron microscopy (SBEM, SBF-SEM) and animal models, and also engage in development of new technologies and many collaborative projects.

We are interested in intercellular associations of the nervous system. Among them, we would like to clarify the structural and functional changes and their molecular background in myelination and myelin diseases. One of our focuses is on mitochondrial dynamics, which are involved in pathophysiology of various diseases. We are trying to clarify the association of mitochondria and myelin diseases, and develop approaches for their regulation.

* Battulga et al. Glia. In press (2024)
* Ohno et al. Neurosci Res. In press (2024)
* Nakamura et al. Elife. 12:e83108 (2023)
* Tanaka et al. Glia. 69:2488 (2021)
* Ohno et al. PNAS. 111:9953 (2014)

Figure 1. Reconstruction of serial electron microscopic images from corpus callosum of control (a) and demyelination model (b) mice, and 3D reconstruction of axonal mitochondria (c). Modified from Ohno et al. PNAS (2014).

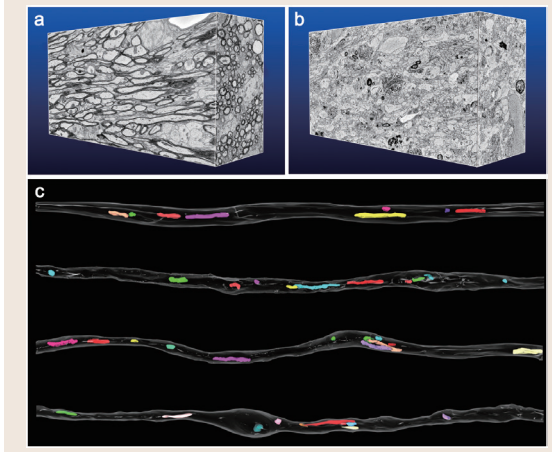
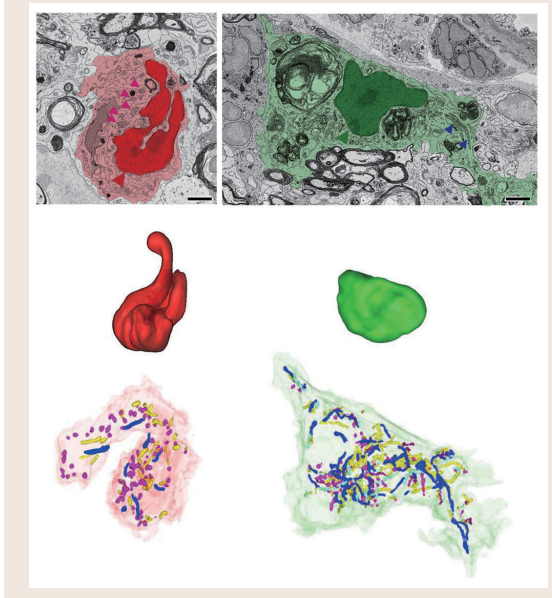
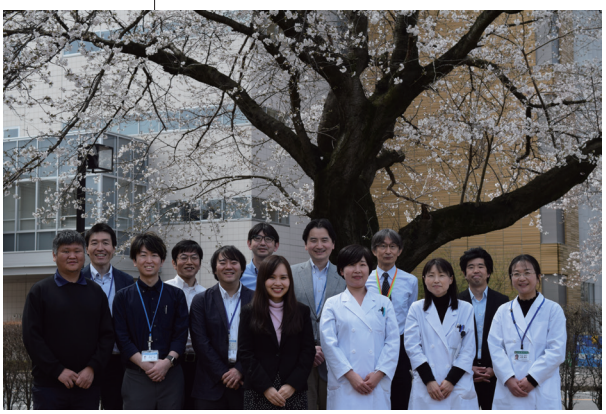


Figure 2. Colored electron microscopic images (upper row) and 3D reconstruction of nuclei (middle row) and mitochondria (lower row) of monocyte- (red) and microglia-derived (green) macrophages in a mouse spinal cord of a demyelination model. Modified from Katoh et al. Sci Rep (2017).





Division of Visual Information Processing

YOSHIMURA, Yumiko
Professor
Neurophysiology

YONEDA, Taisuke
Assistant Professor
Neuroscience

ONODERA, Koun
Assistant Professor
Neuroscience

Analysis of mechanisms underlying information processing and activity-dependent functional developments in the neocortex

Sensory experience during postnatal development is essential for the maturation and refinement of neuronal circuits in the sensory cortex. This process enables the development of cortical functions that are well-suited to the living environment. To elucidate the mechanisms underlying information processing in the sensory cortex and the experience-dependent regulation of this processing, we are studying the relationship between visual functions and the signaling properties of neural circuits, using rat and mouse visual cortex. To this end, we are analyzing the visual responses of cortical neurons using multi-channel electrodes or calcium imaging with two-photon microscopy. Also, we are studying neural circuit properties through a combination of laser scanning photostimulation and whole-cell patch-clamp recording methods in slice preparations, and mapping neural connections morphologically using modern virus tracers. The following is a list of our main ongoing projects:

1. Synaptic plasticity and visual response plasticity in animals at different developmental stages and in animals subjected to manipulations of visual experience during postnatal development.
2. Developmental mechanisms of visual responsiveness, plasticity, and synaptic connections in specific neuron subtypes.
3. Cell-lineage dependent establishment of neuronal connections and visual responsiveness.

We are also conducting collaborative research and seeking graduate students interested in the developmental mechanisms of brain functions.

* Yoneda T, Hayashi K, Yoshimura Y (2023) Experience-dependent functional plasticity and visual response selectivity of surviving subplate neurons in the mouse visual cortex. PNAS. 120(9):e2217011120
* Kimura R, Yoshimura Y (2021) The contribution of low contrast-preferring neurons to information representation in the primary visual cortex after learning. Science Adv. 7 (48)

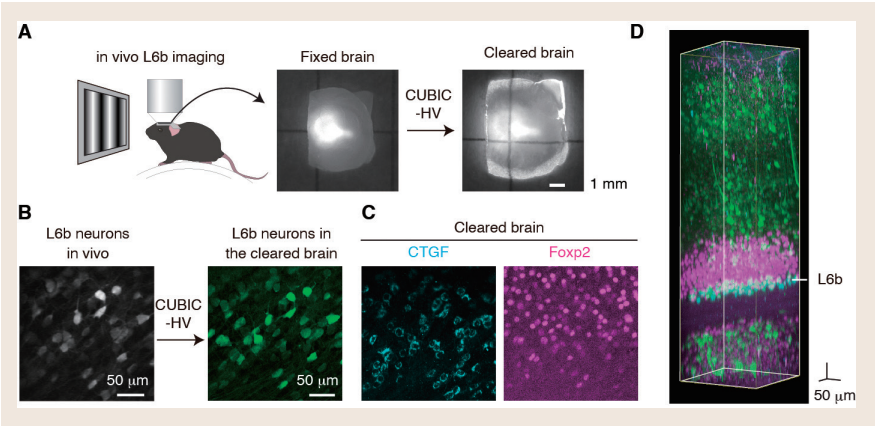


Figure Analysis of visual response plasticity based on cortical neuron subtypes
(A) Visual responses were recorded from layer 6b of the primary visual cortex of living mice with two-photon imaging, followed by tissue clearing. (B) Layer 6b neurons from in vivo two-photon imaging (left) and the same areas from a cleared brain (right). (C) Most of the recorded L6b neurons expressed CTGF which is a subplate neuron marker. Foxp2 is a marker of cortico-thalamic neurons. (D) An example of a volumetric image of cleared brain.

Division of Biophotonics

Biophotonics Research Group, Exploratory Research Center on Life and Living Systems

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Neurophysiology
Chronobiology

OTOMO, Kohei
Associate Professor
Spectroscopy
Physical Pharmacy

AGETSUMA, Masakazu
Associate Professor
System Neurophysiology
Molecular ethology

ISHII, Hirokazu
Assistant Professor
Developmental biology
Biophysics

LEE, Ming Liang
Project Assistant Professor
Neurophysiology
Metabolic biology

Elucidation of Physiological Functions through Innovative Bioimaging Utilizing Optical Technology

We are leading the research and development of innovative bioimaging techniques and their application to basic medicine by utilizing state-of-the-art technologies such as laser optics and material chemistry. In particular, we are leading the world in the development of non-invasive imaging and manipulation techniques for live individuals and tissues, as well as super-resolution and ultra-high-speed imaging by utilizing multiphoton excitation and nonlinear optical processes. This has enabled us to develop quantitative visualization and analysis methods for physiological functions, and we aim to understand the principles of emergence and the molecular basis of life functions, including hibernation and biological rhythms, through visualization and analysis of neural circuits and activities, and opening and release.

Recently, we have succeeded in developing a multiphoton microscope that enables fluorescence imaging of the deepest parts of living organisms, using near-infrared ultrashort pulse lasers and adaptive optics. In the brains of live mice, we succeeded in capturing tomographic images of nerve cells in the hippocampal dentate gyrus, which is approximately 1.6 mm deep from the surface, and also in observing the activity of hippocampal CA1 neurons at video rates. Furthermore, we are promoting research on biological rhythms in mammals, particularly the generation and function of circadian rhythms with a 24-hour cycle, using long-term imaging techniques for cellular functions.

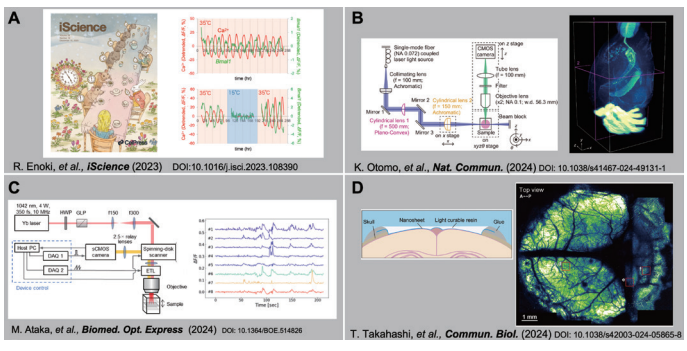
On the other hand, we are also promoting the development of super-resolution microscopy techniques that can capture images of minute structures and molecular dynamics in living cells with a resolution approaching that of an electron microscope. Furthermore, using high-speed 3D imaging, we are applying it to the elucidation of the principles of emergence of local neural circuit functions, the physiological functions of endocrine and exocrine glands and plant cells, and the elucidation of the molecular mechanisms of disease onset.

In this research division, we are actively collaborating with a wide range of laboratories covering not only life sciences but also applied physics, material chemistry, basic medicine, and pharmacology, and are actively engaged in joint research. We aim to promote the creation of a new interdisciplinary field, with the advancement of imaging techniques that can capture physiological phenomena in living organisms as they are, and the cell physiology of nerves and secretion as the vertical and horizontal threads, respectively.

We are looking for graduate students and young researchers who are passionate about exploring new frontiers in science.

∗ R. Enoki, et al., iScience,26, 108390, (2023)
∗ K. Otomo, et al., Nat. Commun,15, 4941 (2024)
∗ M. Ataka, et al., Biomed. Opt. Express,15,1089 (2024)
∗ T. Takahashi, et al., Commun. Biol.,7, 232 (2024)

Fig. (A) Cold-induced suspension and resetting of Ca^{2+} and transcriptional rhythms in the suprachiasmatic nucleus neurons. (B) Whole-brain fluorescence imaging of mouse using novel light-sheet microscopy. (C) High-speed volumetric imaging with an electronically tunable lens. (D) Ultra-widefield observation using novel optical materials.



Division of Multicellular Circuit Dynamics

WAKE, Hiroaki
Professor
Neuroscience
Neurophysiology
Neuroanatomy

NARUSHIMA, Madoka
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Neuroscience

YAMAGUCHI, Hirohi
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Neuroscience

Analysis of physiological changes in multicellular circuit dynamics responsible for higher brain

1. Aim of Research

The Division Multicellular Circuit Dynamics aims to elucidate the circuitry mechanism of neuron and glia cells in central nervous system. For this purpose, 1. We focus on the glial physiological functions that affect on the neuronal circuits and ultimately on the behavior output. 2. We focus on the functional connectivity of the local multicellular circuits and quantify the connectivity by our developed holographic microscope to modulate the circuits. Please see below for the detail.

(1) Project to reveal physiological functions of glial cells

(a) Microglia : We previously showed that microglia directly contact on synapse to monitor their functions using two photon microscopes (Wake et al., 2009). Our recent research showed that microglia contact on synapse via P2Y12 signaling to modulate their function and thus to regulate the synchronization of neuronal circuits (Akiyoshi et al., 2018, Badimon et al., 2020). In addition, we focused on blood brain barrier (BBB) permeability with systemic inflammation. Microglia migrate on blood vessels with the induction of systemic inflammation and expressed Cldn5 to form tight junction with endothelial cells to protect their permeability. However, with the progression of inflammation, microglia start to express CD68 to phagocyte astrocyte endfeet and thus increase the BBB permeability (Haruwaka et al., 2019). In addition, somatosensory sensation is enhanced after visual deprivation (cross-modal plasticity), and we found that the neural circuits connecting the somatosensory cortex to the higher visual cortex are important for cross-modal plasticity. We also found that microglia play an important role in the circuit rewiring (Hashimoto et al., 2023).

(b) Oligodendrocyte : Activity-dependent myelination contributes to synchrony of neuronal activity and motor learning using two-photon microscopy and electrophysiological techniques (Sugio et al., submitted). In addition, the lipid synthesis is essential for activity dependent myelination and their contribution on motor learning (Kato et al., 2023).

(2) Development of holographic microscope

To manipulate neuronal and glial circuits with higher temporal and spatial resolution, we developed holographic microscope. Using this system, we measured the local circuit connectivity by stimulating single cell with simultaneous imaging of neuronal populational activity and studied the connectivity change in pain model (Okada et al., 2021). Combined with data on the plasticity of different senses, we are trying to introduce artificial sensation (Tanisumi et al., in preparation).

* Akiyoshi et al., eNeuro (2018)
* Badimon et al., Nature (2020)
* Kato et al., Glia (2023)
* Haruwaka et al., Nat Commun. (2019)
* Hashimoto et al., Cell Rep. (2023)
* Okada et al., Sci Adv. (2021)
* Wake et al., J Neurosci. (2009)

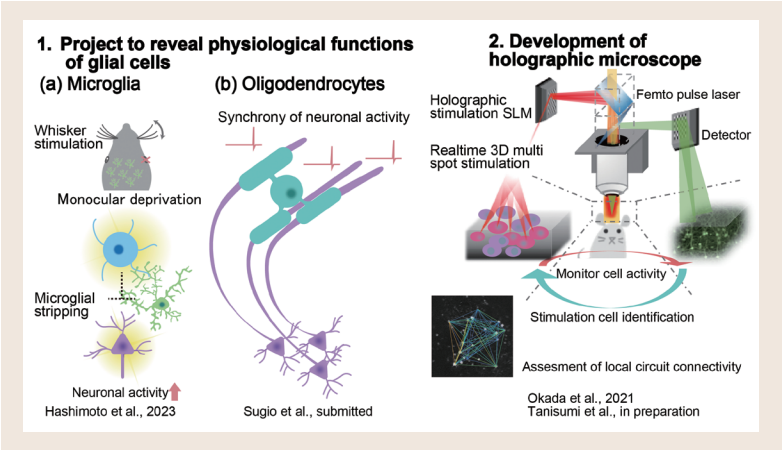


Figure 1 (a) Monocular deprivation induces microglial stripping of inhibitory synapses. This promotes neuronal activation of the secondary visual cortex (V2L) during whisker stimulation. (b) Oligodendrocyte induces synchrony of neuronal activity. Figure 2 Holographic stimulation assess the functional connectivity of local neural circuits.

Division of Behavioral Development

ISODA, Masaki
Professor
Neurophysiology

GO, Yasuhiro
Professor
Comparative Genomics
Neurogenomics

TOMATSU, Saeka
Project Associate Professor
Cognitive Neuroscience
Neurophysiology

NINOMIYA, Taihei
Lecturer
Neuroanatomy
Neurophysiology

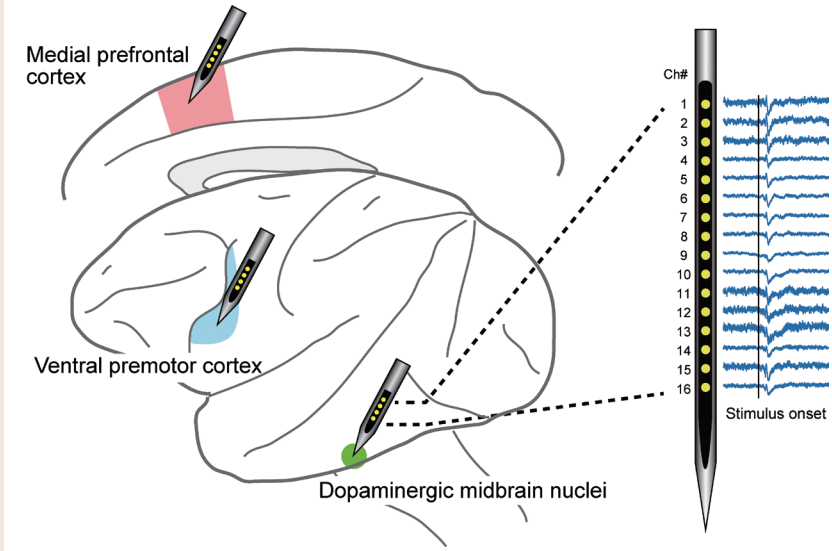
KANEKO, Takaaki
Assistant Professor
Neurophysiology
Cognitive Neuroscience

UEMATSU, Akiko
Project Assistant Professor
Neurophysiology

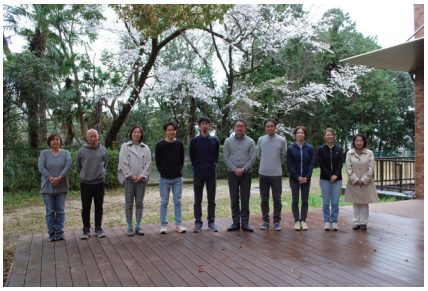
System-level understanding of social cognitive functions

There is increasing attention to social neuroscience, a discipline dedicated to clarifying the neural basis of social cognitive functions. In social neuroscience, studies on human subjects are surely indispensable, as they can tell us about our social mind most directly. Yet research using nonhuman primates is of equal importance for understanding social brain functions at the cellular and network levels. Nonhuman primates are phylogenetically close to humans, they have brain structure and function similar to humans, and they offer unique opportunities to directly record or manipulate neural activity. Our laboratory develops novel, behavioral tasks using two monkeys facing each other and carries out electrophysiological recordings of single-neuron activities and local field potentials across networks of brain regions to achieve a system-level understanding of social cognition, such as decision making on the basis of behavioral information regarding the self and others. We also perform pathway-selective blockade of neural activity using viral vectors to establish a causal relationship between a target neural pathway and a particular social cognitive function. Furthermore, we perform cognitive genomics studies in macaques with mutations in genes associated with human psychiatric and neurodevelopmental disorders, thereby clarifying the genetic basis of social cognitive functions.

* Noritake A & Isoda M. (2025) Cell Rep 44: 115368
* Ninomiya T & Isoda M. (2024) PNAS 121: e2403445121
* Noritake A et al. (2023) Nat Commun 14: 4372
* Tomatsu S & Isoda M (2023) PNAS 120: e2301614120
* Ninomiya T et al. (2021) PNAS 118: e2109653118
* Isoda M (2021) Annu Rev Neurosci 44: 295-313
* Ninomiya T et al. (2020) Nat Commun 11: 5233
* Noritake A et al. (2020) PNAS 117: 5516-5524
* Noritake A et al. (2018) Nat Neurosci 21: 1452-1462
* Yoshida K et al. (2016) Sci Adv 2: e1600558



Multi-site, multi-electrode neural recordings for clarifying the neural basis of social cognitive functions

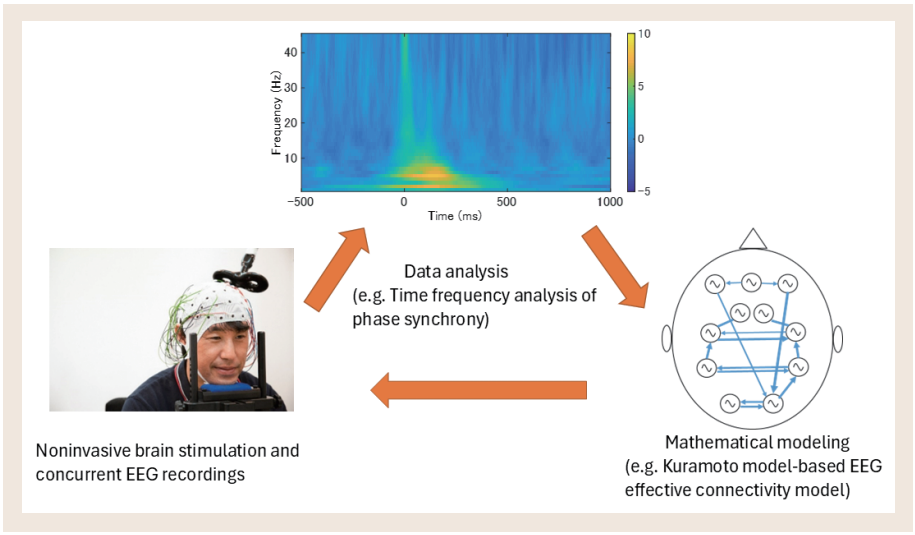


Division of Neural Dynamics

Unravelling the functional roles of neural dynamics

The brain can be considered a complex dynamical system, composed of a number of connected nonlinear elements such as neurons and glial cells. Its activity exhibits a wide range of nonlinear dynamics. For instance, depending on the brain state, the human brain exhibits transient oscillations and synchronization at various frequency bands. We investigate the functional roles of nonlinear neural dynamics such as oscillation, synchrony, metastability, and noise-induced phenomena in perception, cognition, motor, and social functions from a computational neuroscience perspective. We measure and analyze scalp electroencephalographic (EEG) signals in humans while participants are engaged in cognitive tasks, at rest, or during noninvasive brain stimulation such as transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) and transcranial electrical stimulation (tES). We also analyze electrocorticographic (ECoG), magnetoencephalographic (MEG), and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) data in humans, as well as imaging and electrophysiological data in distinct modalities in animals. We promote computational studies through data analysis and data-driven mathematical modeling based on nonlinear dynamical systems theory, information theory, signal processing theory, complex network analysis, data assimilation, and statistical machine learning theory. We also collaborate with researchers to analyze clinical data for stroke and epilepsy patients, as well as persons with developmental disabilities. Our goal is to understand clinical symptoms in terms of altered neural dynamics and to explore potential applications for brain-machine interfaces. Moreover, we investigate the relationships between neural dynamics and modulating factors such as autonomic nervous activity and excitation/inhibition balance in neural circuits to understand the functional roles of neural dynamics from an integrative perspective.

* Goto Y, Kitajo K (2024) Selective consistency of recurrent neural networks induced by plasticity as a mechanism of unsupervised perceptual learning. PLoS Computational Biology 20(9): e1012378. doi: 10.1371/journal.pcbi.1012378
* Yokoyama H, Kitajo K (2023) A data assimilation method to track excitation-inhibition balance change using scalp EEG. Communications Engineering, 2, 92, doi: 10.1038/s44172-023-00143-7
* Yokoyama H, Kitajo K (2022) Detecting changes in dynamical structures in synchronous neural oscillations using probabilistic inference. NeuroImage, 252, 119052, doi: 10.1016/j.neuroimage.2022
* Okazaki YO, Nakagawa Y, Mizuno Y, Hanakawa T, Kitajo K (2021) Frequency- and area-specific phase entrainment of intrinsic cortical oscillations by repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation. Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 15: 608947
* Kawano T, Hattori N, Uno Y, Hatakenaka M, Yagura H, Fujimoto H, Nagasako M, Mochizuki H, Kitajo K, Miyai I (2021) Association between aphasia severity and post-stroke brain network alterations assessed using the electroencephalographic phase synchrony index. Scientific Reports, 11, 112469, doi: 10.1038/s41598-021-91978-7
* Okazaki YO, Mizuno Y, T. Kitajo K (2020) Probing dynamical cortical gating of attention with concurrent TMS-EEG. Scientific Reports, 10, 4959, 1-10.



To understand the functional roles of neural dynamics in humans, we employ the TMS-EEG concurrent recording paradigm to measure neural activity. Next, we analyze the EEG data and apply data-driven mathematical modeling techniques to gain insights into the neural dynamics.

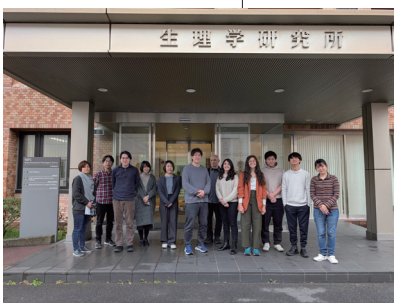
KITAJO, Keiichi
Professor
Computational Neuroscience
Cognitive Neuroscience

OKAZAKI, Yuka
Assistant Professor
Cognitive Neuroscience

YUASA, Kenichi
Assistant Professor
Cognitive Neuroscience
Neuroimaging

TSUCHIMOTO, Shohei
Project Assistant Professor (Grant Project)
Psychophysiology
Cognitive Neuroscience

FUJIHIRA, Ryo
Project Assistant Professor (Grant Project)
Developmental Brain Science



Division of Sensory and Cognitive Brain Mapping

TAKEMURA, Hiromasa
Professor
Neuroimaging
Neuroscience
Vision Science

LUO, Junxiang
Assistant Professor
Neuroscience
Vision Science

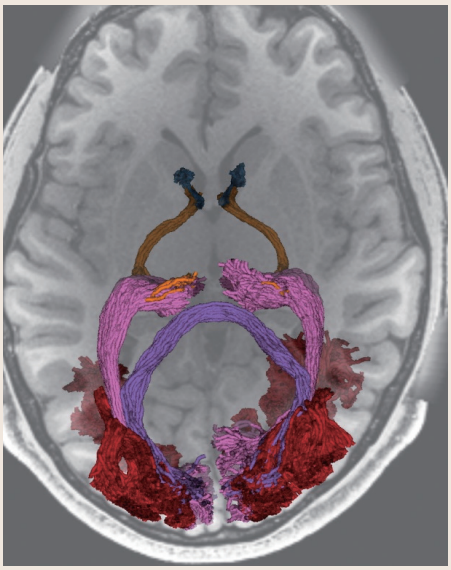
OISHI, Hiroki
Assistant Professor
Neuroimaging
Neuroscience

Structural and functional brain mapping

The human brain processes sensory information from the environment to support our daily activities. The human brain comprises several distinct structural properties, including cortical layers, subcortical nuclei, and white matter tracts connecting brain areas. However, how our brain functions emerges from these structures is not yet fully understood. In other words, how can the "software" (function) of the brain be established based on "hardware" (structure)? To address this question, we investigate the structure-function relationship in brains.

Specifically, we combine structural and functional neuroimaging methods using magnetic resonance imaging facilities in the institute, including 7T MRI and 3T MRI with a strong gradient magnetic field, to understand how brain functions are related to brain structure. We also perform psychophysical studies to investigate mechanisms of visual information processing in humans. In addition, through collaborations, we perform cognitive neuroscience studies on sensory, motor, learning, and language functions, comparative studies on brain structure, and clinical neuroimaging studies to evaluate the impact of retinal disorders on brain structure and function.

* Luo J et al. (2024) J Vis 24, 12.
* Takemura H et al. (2024a) Curr Biol 34, 3632-3643.
* Takemura H et al. (2024b) Magn Reson Medi Sci 23, 316-340.
* Oishi H et al. (2023) NeuroImage 265, 119777.
* Miyata T et al. (2022) J Neurosci 42(35), 6761-6769.



Visual white matter pathways in humans identified by diffusion-weighted MRI (Takemura et al., 2024b).

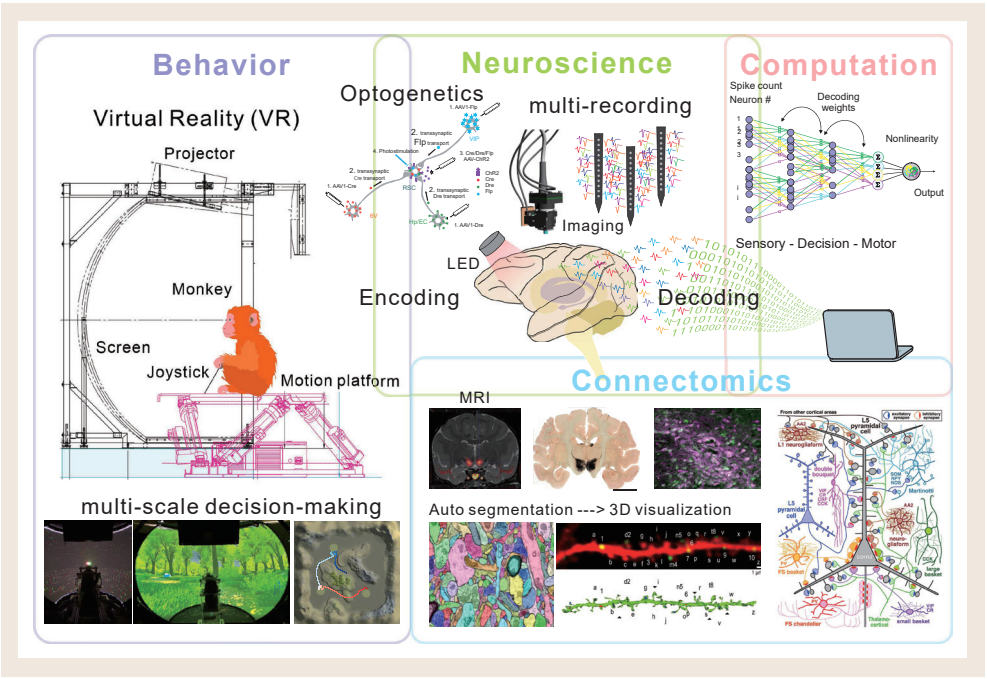
Division of Multisensory Integration Systems

SASAKI, Ryo
Professor
Cognitive Neuroscience

Neural dynamics of multisensory integration for flexible behaviors

Our goal is to clarify the dynamics of brain networks underling flexible cognitive behaviors and decision-making using non-human primates. Furthermore, we investigate the biological basis of cognitive diversity through multisensory integration, which is the origin of the mind and intelligence of primates. We conduct multispecies empirical comparative research mainly focusing on approaches using non-human primate model animals that have higher-order brains, which will enable us to clarify the evolutionary background of the dynamics of brain neural circuits that lead to the complexity and multidimensionality of decision-making and behavioral choice in animals including humans. To achieve these goals, we develop various behavioral paradigms with realistic environment utilizing virtual reality (VR) technology, and perform computational analysis based on large-scale neural activity recordings and neural circuit manipulation applying optogenetics. Furthermore, we will clarify the details of the fine three dimensional structures such as synapses by nano-level connectome analysis using electron microscopes to explain the mechanisms of the formation and development of cognitive functions. Through these techniques, we aim to understand the neural dynamics of diverse cognitive behavioral systems from both functional and causal aspects. In particular, we focus on motion systems, spatial navigation systems, balancing system for risk-reward decisions, tracking and avoidance systems, motor control systems, as well as artistic cognition created through flexible integration processing of multisensory inputs and its generating mechanism of impressions and emotions.

* Sasaki R et al. (2024) Science 383(6678):55-61
* Sasaki R et al. (2020) Nat Neurosci 23(8): 1004-1015
* Sasaki & Uka. (2009) Neuron 62(1): 147-157



Center for Research Collaboration

KUBO, Yoshihiro
Professor
Director

Outline

This center named "Center for Collaborative Research" was established in April 2016. It consists of 5 sections of Collaboration Promotion, Advanced Research Support, National Bio-Resource (NBR) Project, Advanced Project Promotion and International Collaborative Research Project.

(1) As a mission of the inter- university research institute, NIPS promotes and conducts collaborative researches. The "Collaboration Promotion" section is in charge of facilitation of joint researches utilizing the facilities of NIPS. It responds to inquiries about available research facilities and laboratories suitable to achieve research aims, and also coordinates the joint research. Thus, it serves as a sort of "concierge" of joint research with NIPS. It also calls for requests of facilities and experimental techniques which researchers wish to have in NIPS. To advertise the collaborative research activity of NIPS, we organized NIPS research meeting(s) in universities outside of NIPS every year after 2016. In FY2025, NIPS will organize 5 research meetings outside of NIPS.

(2) NIPS, in cooperation with NIBB, is engaged in "Supporting Platform for Advanced Bio-Imaging" project supported by JSPS KAKENHI (FY2022 to 2027). In this framework, the "Advanced Research Support" section serves to promote support for advanced imaging techniques using optical microscope, electron microscope and fMRI. The 2nd activity of this section is to support "The Next Generation Brain Research" project. It is to organize a symposium of wide-ranged brain science researchers including the ones belonging to MEXT Transformative Research Areas. The 3rd one is to support, as a Subsidiary Research Institution, a new program of "Multidisciplinary Frontier Brain and Neuroscience Discoveries (Brain/MINDS 2.0)" by the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED), entitled "Understanding brain functions and disease pathophysiology through the development and application of brain data integration platform" (Principal Research Institution: RIKEN CBS) (FY2023-2029).

(3) NIPS has been serving for the supply of monkeys for brain science experiments, as a part of National Bio-Resource (NBR) Project. "NBR Project" section is in charge of this activity. In FY 2017, the primary responsible role of NBR Project was transferred from NIPS to the Primate Research Center (2022-: Center for the Evolutionary Origins of Human Behavior) in Kyoto University. NIPS will continue to cooperatively contribute to the activity of NBR Project.

(4) "Advanced Project Promotion" section was newly launched in FY2022, by reorganizing the previous "Visiting Collaborative Research Project" section. In this section, the exploration of multidisciplinary cutting-edge research will be promoted.

(5) The "International Collaborative Research Project" section is a laboratory run by a visiting professor from abroad who stays for a significantly long time in NIPS. The laboratory is run up to for 3 years. From FY2023, Dr. Andrew Moorhouse (University of New South Wales, Sydney, (from Feb 2025 University of Sydny), Australia) newly joined and will serve as a P.I. for 3 years to promote research on the brain function at the circuit level.

In summary, the "Center for Collaborative Research" plays critical roles in the promotion of various collaborative research activities, including inter-university research, advanced bio-imaging support, supply of monkeys for experiments, and various research collaborations.

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▶ Section of NBR Project 28
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▶ Section of International Collaborative Research Project 30

▶ Section of Collaboration Promotion

KUBO, Yoshihiro
Professor
Biophysics
Neurobiology

NISHIO, Akiko
Project Assistant Professor
Neurophysiology
Cognitive Neuroscience

National Institute for Physiological Sciences (NIPS) is an inter-university research institute, which organizes some of the latest large experimental equipment and devices that are difficult for other universities or research institutes to purchase, maintain, manage, or operate, such as serial block-face scanning electron microscope (SBF-SEM) , multiphoton excitation microscopes, dual functional magnetic resonance imaging (dual fMRI) , 7-tesla ultra-high magnetic field MRI machines and cryo-electron microscope with the aim of providing facilities and technical support for researchers on a nationwide basis. NIPS also actively develops, produces, and provides high quality viral vectors and gene modified animals for researchers in neuroscience and other research field with technical support, as a center for the production of those resources that are difficult for individual research laboratories to create.

Section of Collaboration Promotion has been organized as a consultation counter to help researchers belonging to other universities or research institutes throughout Japan smoothly launch joint research projects in NIPS. Its aim is to support researchers who maintain passive attitudes toward such projects for various reasons, including unestablished research networks or lack of knowledge about methods to embody their ideas as studies. In addition to these, NIPS also offers research techniques and device utilizations to corporate researchers who aim to develop new technologies or products.

One of the most important purposes of us is to promote liaison between researchers in diverse research fields and NIPS. It comprehensively performs activities to support joint research and enhance its recognition, such as setting up exhibition booths to introduce joint research in NIPS at meetings of related academic societies and NIPS research meetings held outside NIPS.

▶ Section of Advanced Research Support

SADATO, Norihiro
Project Professor
Functional Neuroimaging
Neuroscience

MARUYAMA, Megumi
Project Associate Professor
Neurophysiology
Environmental Physiology

Frontier of Spin Life Sciences (Spin-L)

In FY2023, the Frontier of Spin Life Sciences (Spin-L), one of the "MEXT Promotion of Development of a Joint Usage/ Research System Project: Coalition of Universities for Research Excellence Program (CURE)" was launched. This project aims to establish a center to advance life sciences research using spin science, creating a next-generation field that integrates molecular, biological, and physiological sciences. The Advanced Research Support will serve as the administrative office in close collaboration with the Institute for Molecular Science and The Exploratory Research Center on Life and Living Systems (ExCELLS).

Multidisciplinary Frontier Brain and Neuroscience Discoveries (Brain/MINDS 2.0)

From FY2023, the National Institute for Physiological Sciences (NIPS) has been adopted as the core organization of the newly launched AMED program, the Multidisciplinary Frontier Brain and Neuroscience Discoveries (Brain/MINDS 2.0). This program will strengthen collaboration between basic and clinical medicine and between academia and industry, and utilize innovative technologies and research results to elucidate brain mechanisms and promote research into breakthrough diagnosis, treatment, and drug discovery seeds for dementia and other neurological disorders. The Advanced Research Support will be responsible for tasks related to international correspondence in brain science research and the construction of a human brain imaging database.

Advanced Bioimaging Support (ABiS)

The Advanced Research Support is operating the administrative office of the Advanced Bioimaging Support (ABiS), which is newly launched in 2022 as a project of FY2022-2027 Grant-in-Aid for Transformative Research Areas — Platforms for Advanced Technologies and Research Resources. ABiS is a framework for supporting cutting-edge imaging techniques (observation of samples and data analysis) using various types of microscopes and MRI, where the National Institute for Physiological Sciences (NIPS) and the National Institute for Basic Biology (NIBB) work as the core organizations. Through the collaborative research that these institutes promote, ABiS is forming a network with domestic partner organizations to provide custom-made support for bioimaging techniques.

JISEDAI-NOU Project

The Advanced Research Support has also operated the administrative office of the JISEDAI-NOU Project since FY2016. This project, which is led by members of the brain science–related Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research on Innovative Areas, promotes efforts that support the brain science community, including planning symposia with a focus on cultivating young researchers, disseminating related information via a mailing list, and operating a website.

The promotion of National Bio-Resource Project "Japanese monkey"
The improvement of monkey quality

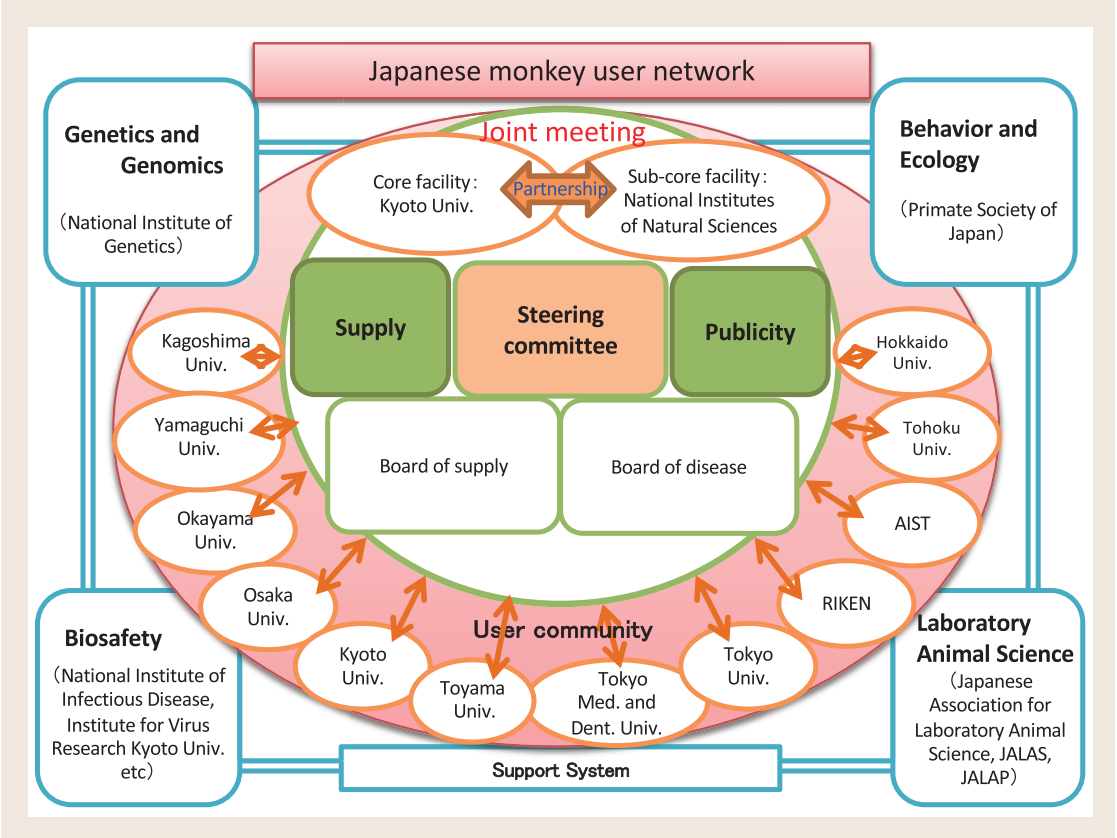
ISODA, Masaki
Professor
Neurophysiology

This laboratory has been organized since 2002 for acceleration of National Bio-Resource Project (NBRP) “Japanese monkey”. National Institute for Physiological Sciences (sub-core facility) and Kyoto University (core facility) together keep promoting the project.

NBRP “Japanese monkey” was established as a stable breeding of and supply system for Japanese macaques for laboratory use. We have performed the projects with emphasis on the followings: (1) establishment of the breeding system, (2) provision of monkeys for researchers in Japan, (3) collection of data characteristic of the Japanese macaque, and (4) integrative administration of NBRP "Japanese monkey".

The Japanese macaques have high cognitive abilities and hand dexterity. Therefore, this animal species has been used for research into higher brain functions and various neurological diseases. We have administered this resource project while coordinating with researchers. We have collected data about Japanese macaques for the improvement of monkey quality.

* 中村克樹，他，ナショナルバイオリソースプロジェクト「ニホンザル」の現状と課題．霊長類研究 33 巻 (2017)
* T. Isa et al., Japanese Macaques as laboratory Animals. Exp. Anim. 58 (5), 451-457 (2009)



▶ Section of Advanced Project Promotion

Director General, NIPS

The aim of this research unit is to intensively explore new research areas and develop advanced research technologies under the leadership of the director-general. It has been established according to the opinion of the National Institute for Physiological Sciences Steering Committee in 2022.

▶ Section of International Collaborative Research Project

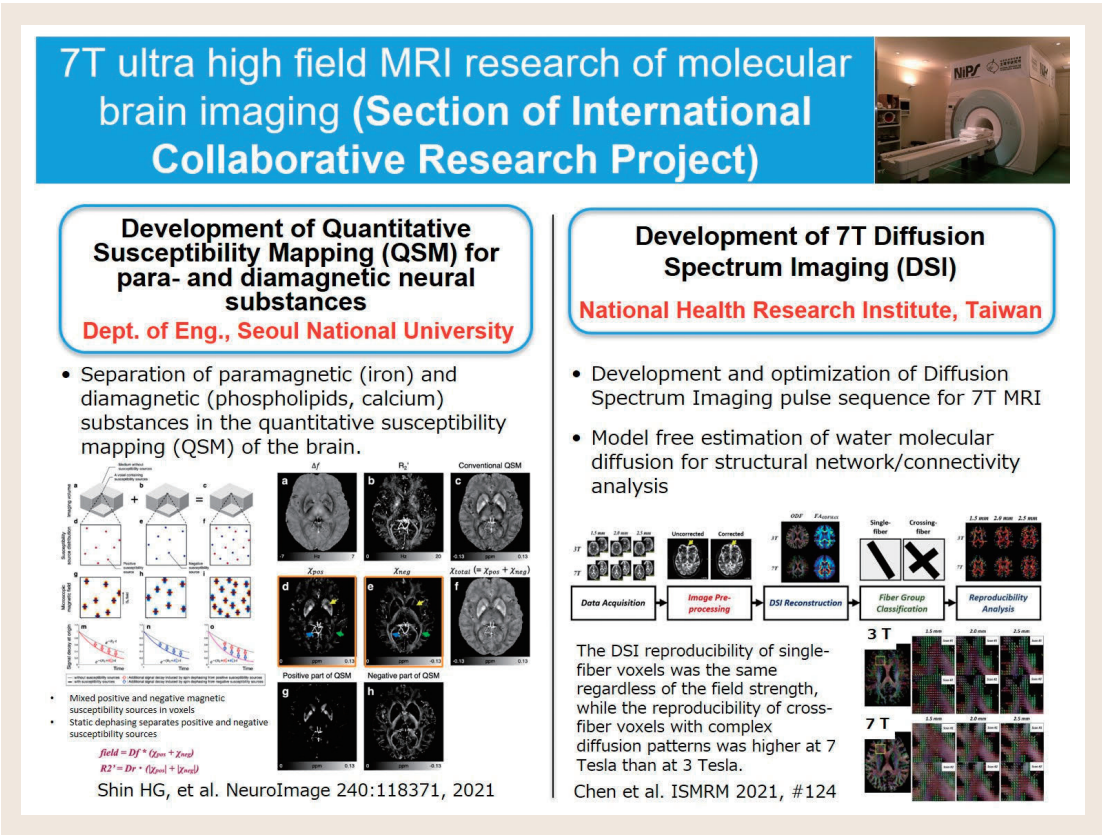
Introduction of the Section of International Collaborative Research Project

MOORHOUSE, Andrew
Visiting Professor
Neuroscience

WAKE, Hiroaki
Professor
Neuroscience
Neurophysiology
Neuroanatomy

In FY2014, NIPS established the Section of International Collaborative Research Project. In FY2017, NIPS invited Dr. Denis Le Bihan to join as a Principal Investigator (P.I.) of the section. He is a leading authority on Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and is well-known as an inventor of the revolutionary imaging method called diffusion-weighted imaging. Dr. Le Bihan was also a founding director of NeuroSpin, which belongs to the Life Science Bureau, a basic research division of France's Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives (CEA). The institute conducts brain research using MRI at a very high level of technological sophistication and is also leading the development of the world's highest-performance MRI instrument, the Human-oriented 11.7 Tesla Device. Dr. Le Bihan served as P.I. of the Section of International Collaborative Research Project in NIPS for 6 years till FY2022, and engaged in research on the development of imaging technology using 7Tesla-MRI and its application to brain science, in collaboration with the Division of Cerebral Integration in NIPS (Professor Norihiro Sadato). Two international projects with Seoul National University (South Korea) and National Health Research Institutes (Taipei) were also performed (Fig. 1).

From FY2023, NIPS newly invites Dr. Andrew Moorhouse (University of New South Wales Sydney, Australia) as an adjunct foreign professor. Dr. Moorhouse serves as P.I. of this section and promote research on the brain function based on the circuit, in collaboration with Division of Multicellular Circuit Dynamics (Professor Hiroaki Wake).



Supportive Center for Brain Research

ISODA, Masaki
Professor
Director

Outline

The Center for Brain Experiment was reorganized into the Supportive Center for Brain Research in April 2008 to expand its role of supporting brain science research at the NIPS. The new center was initially comprised of six sections: Sections of Brain Structure Information, Brain Function Information, Multiphoton Neuroimaging, Electron Microscopy, Instrument Design, and Ine Marine Laboratory. In 2010, the Ine Marine Laboratory completed its mission and was closed. In 2012, two sections - the Section of Viral Vector Development and the Section of Primate Model Development - were newly opened. The mission of the former was to develop and distribute viral vectors, and the mission of the latter was to breed and supply Japanese macaques, both to researchers for brain research purposes. In April 2016, the Section of Viral Vector Development was relocated to the Center for Genetic Analysis of Behavior. At the same time, the name of the Section of Primate Model Development was changed to the NBR Project and relocated to the Center for Research Collaboration. In April 2021, the Section of Cellular Electrophysiology was created.

Brain science is one of the hottest research fields worldwide, of course including Japan, and recent progress in this field is amazing and surprisingly rapid. The NIPS is now widely recognized as an important hub for brain science research in Japan, and most NIPS researchers are engaged in some way in the relevant field. The mission of the Supportive Center for Brain Research is not only to support intramural studies at the NIPS, but also to play a role in promoting fruitful collaborations in the neuroscience community both in Japan and abroad through joint researches.

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▶ Section of Multiphoton Neuroimaging

Imaging activation of signaling molecules in living cells by 2-photon fluorescence lifetime imaging microscopy

MURAKOSHI, Hideji
Associate Professor
Biophysics
Neuroscience

Our state of the art two-photon fluorescence lifetime imaging microscopes allows us to image protein activity and protein-protein interaction in living cells in deep tissue such as brain slice and brain of living mouse. We accept the collaborative research using the fluorescence lifetime imaging microscope for imaging the activity and interaction of various signaling proteins. We also accept students to pursue the PhD degree, especially, the students who are interested in molecular imaging.

In addition to the cutting-edge microscope techniques, we try to develop novel fluorescent proteins and light-controllable signaling proteins. By far, we succeeded in visualizing the activities of signaling proteins in dendritic spine of hippocampal neuron by using two-photon microscopy by combining the photo-activatable probes, new fluorescent proteins, electrophysiology. These techniques will enable us to reveal the system of neural networks and underlying molecular mechanisms in a living mouse neuron.

Our mission is to reveal "missing-links" underlying between molecular functions and physiological functions in a living body. We believe that the development & application of optical imaging methods will reveal the biological system at the cellular level.

* Tsujioka et al. Science Advances 2023
* Ueda et al. Cell Reports 2022
* Shibata et al. Nature Communications 2021
* Saneyoshi et al. Neuron 2019
* Murakoshi et al. Neuron 2017
* Hedrick et al. Nature 2016
* Murakoshi et al. Nature 2011

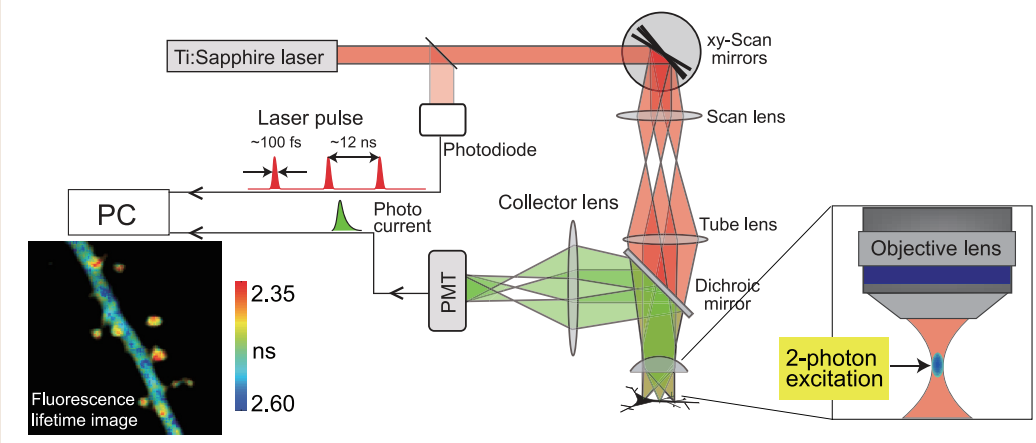


Figure 1. Two-photon excitation is the phenomenon that two photons of half energy than needed for one photon excitation can excite a fluorescent molecule. The advantages of 2-photon excitation are 1) Because infrared light is used for excitation, it minimizes excitation-light scattering in the tissue 2) Because 2-photon excitation happens only at the focal point of an objective lens, the background signal is strongly suppressed. These effects enable us to image cells and subcellular structures in deep tissue with high spatial resolution. Recently, the combination of 2-photon excitation and fluorescence lifetime imaging method enabled us to image the protein-protein interaction or structural change of protein in deep tissue such as brain slice. The fluorescence lifetime is measured by counting the arrival time of signal photon at the detector upon a laser pulse. After making histogram of lifetimes at each pixel by repeating this measurement, the pixel-by-pixel lifetime image is constructed in a pseudocolor format.

▶ Section of Electron Microscopy

FURUSE, Mikio
Professor
Cell Biology

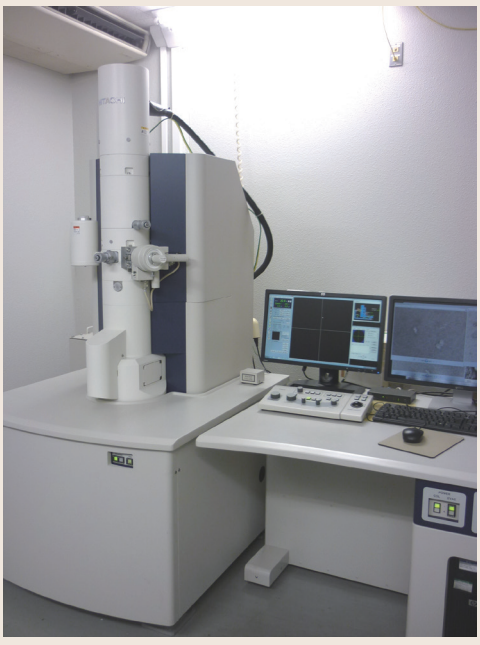
MURATA, Kazuyoshi
Project Professor
Structural biology
Electron Microscopy

Support for electron microscopy

Section of Electron Microscopy is a common experimental facility for NIPS and NIBB. Various types of electron microscopes, equipment for sample preparation, and devices necessary for processing digital data acquired by electron microscopy are available in Section Electron Microscopy, enabling a series of work processes of electron microscopy to be carried out. Ultrastructures of tissues, cells and macromolecules are observed using transmission or scanning electron microscopes (JEOL JEM1010, Hitachi HT-7700, Zeiss Σ IGMA). The facility also provides instruments for their specimen preparations, i.e. ultra-microtome (Leica UC7), high-pressure freezing device (BAL-TEC HPM010), freeze fracture and replica machine (BAL-TEC BAF060), vacuum evaporator (JEOL JEE-420), ion coater (JEC-3000FC), etc. Since 2013, Serial block-face scanning electron microscopy (SBF-SEM; Gatan 3view/Zeiss Σ IGMA/VP & MARLIN) and Array tomography SEM system (Zeiss ATLAS5) have been operated to reveal 3D structures of biological thick specimens. The three-dimensional reconstitution of cellular ultra-structures is performed using image analysis software. In particular, the SBF-SEMs are used for many collaborative projects.

Fig. 1 Serial block-face SEM (SBF-SEM) Gatan 3view - Zeiss S Σ IGMA/VP

Fig. 2 Transmission electron microscope (TEM) Hitachi HT-7700 equipped with 2k x 2k CCD camera



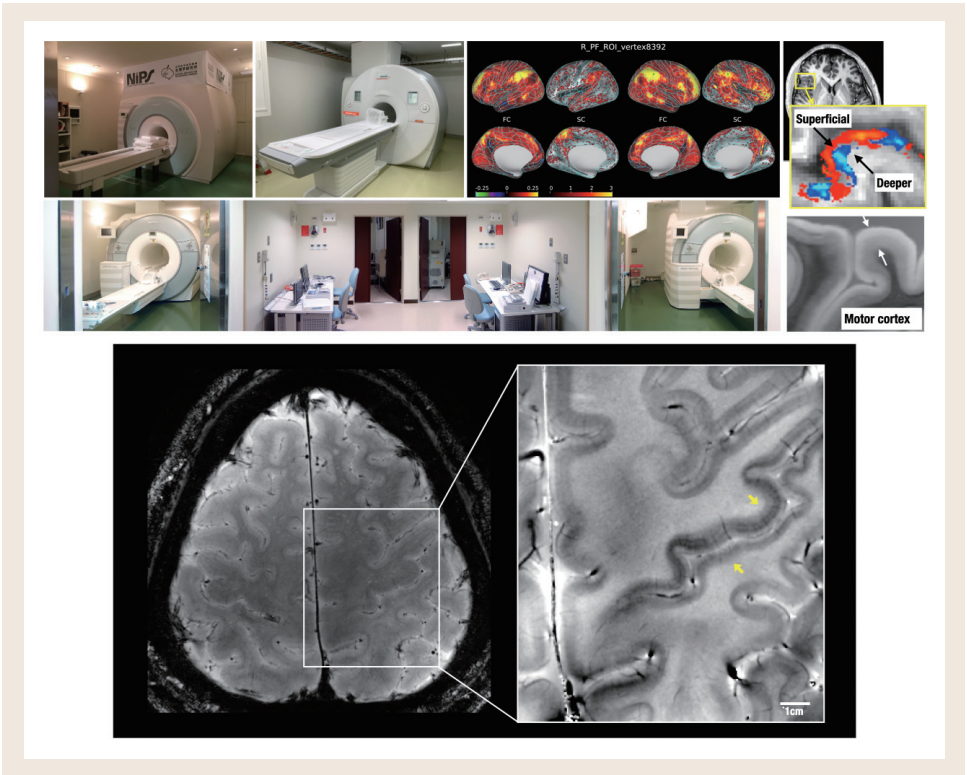
▶ Section of Brain Function Information

Imaging structure and function relationship of human and non-human primate brain by ultra-high field MRI

Magnetic resonance (MR) is an excellent technique for non-invasive observation of biological structure, function, metabolism, and molecular dynamics. Section of Brain Function Information at Supportive Center for Brain Research assists functional and structural measurements of the brain and body of human and non-human primates through the high (3 tesla) and ultra-field field (7 tesla) MRIs. Our laboratory also develops fundamental techniques such as measurement methods, analysis methods, a range of applications, and safety verification.

Furthermore, we will promote research on the relationship between the structure and function of the human brain using MRI and MRS (MR spectroscopy), and develop new measurement methods to collect biological parameters. We also participate in multicenter clinical studies to elucidate diseases by various neuroimaging and promote the investigation of endophenotypes and biomarkers of psychiatric disorders based on the analysis of large-scale imaging data. In addition to developing post process and analysis methods, we train researchers who can make fully utilize the high and ultra-high field MRI in their research.

* Schijven D, Postema MC, Fukunaga M et al. Large-scale analysis of structural brain asymmetries in schizophrenia via the ENIGMA consortium. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 120:e2213880120 (2023)
* Goda N, Hasegawa T, Koketsu D et al., Cerebro-cerebellar interactions in nonhuman primates examined by optogenetic functional magnetic resonance imaging. *Cereb Cortex Commun* 3:tgac022 (2022)
* Maruyama S, Fukunaga M, Sugawara SK et al., Cognitive control affects motor learning through local variations in GABA within the primary motor cortex. *Sci Rep* 11:18566 (2021)
* Yamamoto T, Fukunaga M, Sugawara SK et al., Quantitative Evaluations of Geometrical Distortion Corrections in Cortical Surface-Based Analysis of High-Resolution Functional MRI Data at 7T. *J Magn Reson Imaging.* 53:1220 (2021)
* Fukunaga M, Li TQ, van Gelderen P et al., Layer-specific variation of iron content in cerebral cortex as a source of MRI contrast. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 107:3834 (2010)



MRI systems operated by the National Institute for Physiological Sciencies (7-tesla ultra-high field MRI: Siemens Magnetom 7T, state-of-the-art 3-tesla high-performance gradient MRI: Siemens Magnetom Cima.X, 3-tesla 2-pair simultaneous measurement MRI (hyperscanning MRI): Siemens Magnetom Verio x2). Functional (FC) and structural (SC) brain connectivity mapping by functional MRI (fMRI) and diffusion MRI (dMRI). Layer-fMRI for cortical laminar resolution obtained by 7T MRI.

FUKUNAGA, Masaki
Project Professor
Magnetic Resonance
Neuroimaging
Neuroscience

INUI, Koji
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Psychiatry

YAMAJI, Kazutsuna
Adjunct Professor
Information Science

KOIKE, Takahiko
Associate Professor
Social Neuroscience
Neuroscience

GODA, Naokazu
Assistant Professor
Neuroscience
Neuroimaging
Psychophysics

YAMAMOTO, Tetuya
Project Assistant Professor
(Grant Project)
Neuroimaging
Visual Neuroscience
Visual Psychology

▶ Section of Cellular Electrophysiology

YOSHIMURA, Yumiko
Professor
Neurophysiology

SATAKE, Shin'Ichiro
Assistant Professor
Neurophysiology

OTSUKA, Takeshi
Assistant Professor
Neuroscience

Advancing Research Collaboration by Supporting Electrophysiological Studies

Electrophysiological techniques are useful for studying the functional properties of cells, tissues, and organs (such as the brain and heart) with high temporal resolution. This section aims to elucidate the principles of synaptic transmission, its regulation, the functional architecture of neural circuits, and their dynamic control mechanisms, primarily through electrophysiological approaches. Moreover, we provide consultation and technical guidance on electrophysiological experiments, promote collaborative and contract research, and contribute broadly to the understanding of life phenomena. Ongoing projects are listed below.

1) Neural information processing at the tripartite synapse

Tripartite (three-part) synapses are characterized by physical connections and functional interactions between pre- and postsynaptic neurons and the surrounding glial processes. We focus on the role of neurotransmitter transporters in the integration of neuronal information at the tripartite synapse. We also analyze genetically engineered animals to understand the pathophysiology of neurological disorders, including rapid-onset dystonia with parkinsonism (RDP), alternating hemiplegia of childhood (AHC), and bipolar disorder. In addition to classical techniques such as electrophysiology, immunohistochemistry, and pharmacology, our laboratory has recently introduced photo-releasable caged compounds.

2) Regulation of neural network activity for motor learning

Neurons form complex networks between them and send information to multiple brain areas. We are investigating how neural network activity related motor learning is regulated in the cortex and the basal ganglia system (Fig. 1). We approach these questions using electrophysiology, computer simulation, and behavior analysis. We also analyze how neurotransmitters including dopamine regulate intrinsic membrane properties of cells and reward related behaviors as a research collaboration.

* T. Otsuka, Y. Kawaguchi, *Commun. Biol.* 4, 495 (2021).
* S. Satake, S. Konishi, *Eur. J. Neurosci.* 54, 7048-7062 (2021).
* S. Satake, T. Inoue, K. Imoto, *Cerebellum* 15, 201-207 (2016).
* T. Otsuka, Y. Kawaguchi, *J. Neurpophysiol.* 110, 795-806 (2013).

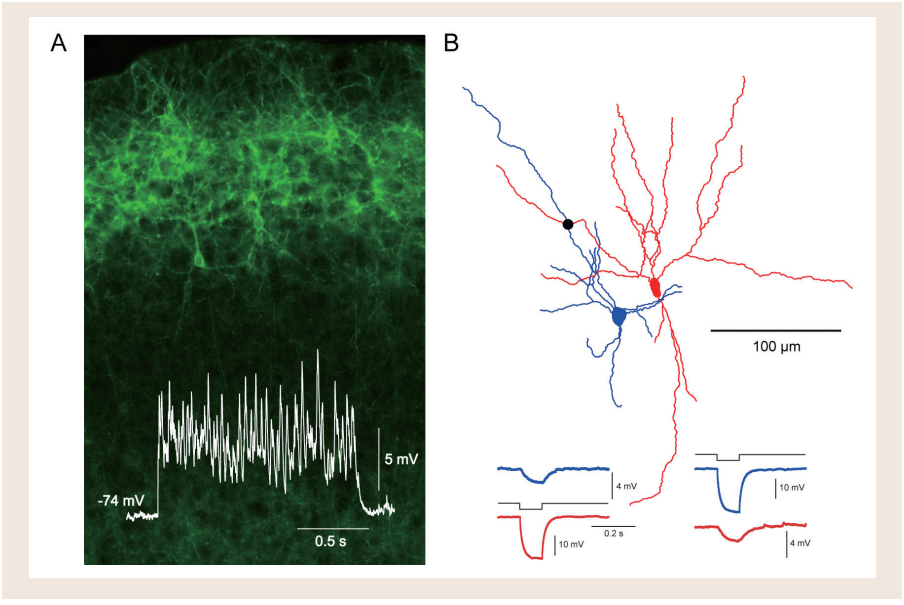

Fig. 1. (A) Network activity evoked by optogenetic stimulation. ChR2-Venus was selectively expressed in cortical L2/3 pyramidal cells. During light stimulation, membrane potential oscillation was induced in L5 pyramidal cell. (B) Reconstruction of cortical FS interneurons. Electrically connected FS cells, confirmed by negative current injection to one of two cells, were simultaneously recorded. ● indicates electrical connection site.

Center for Genetic Analysis of Behavior

NISHIJIMA, Kazutoshi
Professor
Director

Outline

Center for Genetic Analysis of Behavior produces gene-modified rat/mouse using genome editing technologies. The center also provides virus vectors for cell type specific gene modification. The center has facilities to monitor behavior and neuronal activity in those gene-modified rat/mouse. The center is also equipped with systems to monitor the behavioral and neural activity of *Drosophila* at the individual level. Patch-clamp systems for ion channel analysis are also available. These facilites are open for the collaboratory use from researchers of all over the world. This center consists of the following 4 sections.

- Section of Viral Vector Development
- Section of Mammalian Transgenesis
- Section of Multilayer Physiology
- Section of Sensory Physiology

▶ Section of Viral Vector Development 37
▶ Section of Mammalian Transgenesis 38
▶ Section of Multilayer Physiology 39
▶ Section of Sensory Physiology 40

▶ Section of Viral Vector Development

KOBAYASHI, Kenta
Associate Professor
Molecular Neurobiology

Collaboration by providing viral vectors
Functional analysis of specific neural pathways by using viral vectors
Development of the viral vector system useful for analysis of brain functions

A viral vector, which is available to various animal models, is an excellent genetic tool, and at present, it becomes one of most important experimental technologies to analyze brain functions. We set up a system to produce a large amount of high quality viral vectors, AAV and lentiviral vectors. In response to requests, we provide these viral vectors and promote the collaboration.

Brain functions are controlled by complex neural circuits. To understand brain functions, it is necessary to clarify the function of specific neural pathways forming complex circuits. We have succeeded in developing the novel gene transfer system, a dual viral vector system using highly efficient retrograde gene transfer viral vectors, enabling the functional analysis of specific neural pathways (Fig. 1). By using this system, we analyze the function of specific neural pathways forming the cortico-basal ganglia loop. In addition, we have succeeded in developing a novel retrograde gene transfer system based on the AAV vector.

* T. Matsuda et al., Cell. Rep. 43, 113619 (2024)
* Y. Koshimizu et al., Gene. Ther. 28, 339 (2021)
* H. Sano et al., J. Neurosci. Methods. 345, 108887 (2020)
* K. Kobayashi et al., J. Neural. Transm. (Vienna). 125, 67 (2018)
* K. Kobayashi et al., Neurosci. Lett. 630, 45 (2016)

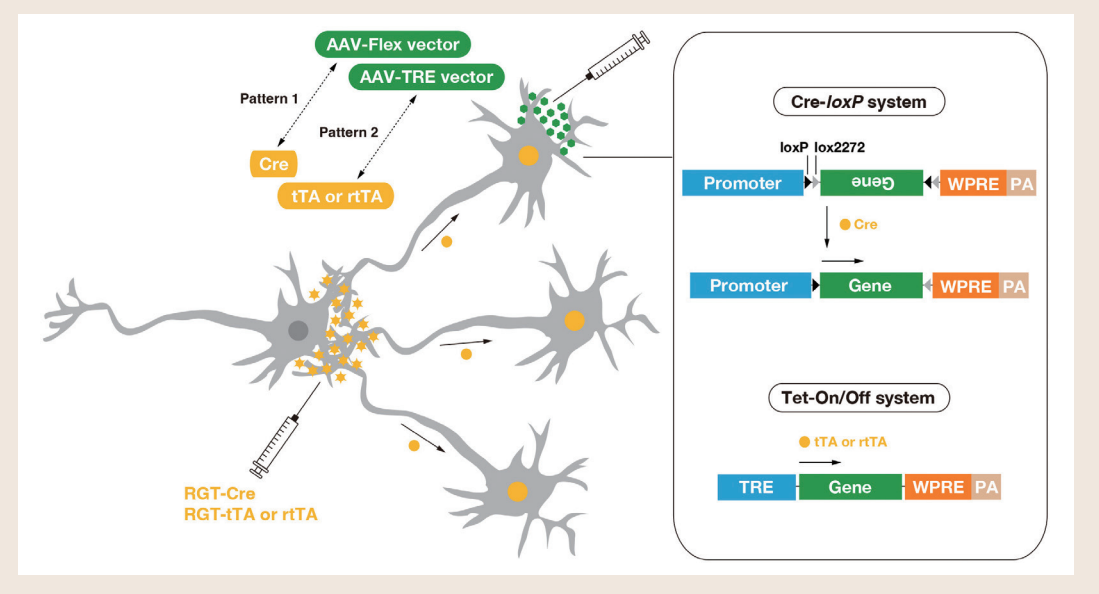

Figure 1. Gene transfer into specific neural pathways using viral vectors. Conditional gene expression in specific neural pathways becomes possible by using a dual viral vector system combining retrograde gene transfer (RGT) viral vectors and AAV vectors. These useful viral vectors are available to collaborators.

▶ Section of Mammalian Transgenesis

Development of Advanced Reproductive / Transgenic Technologies in Laboratory Animals

KOBAYASHI, Toshihiro
Professor
Stem Cell Biology
Embryology

Genetically modified animals such as transgenic and knockout animals are essential tools for current life science research. In particular, recent progress on gene editing technologies including CRISPR/Cas9 system has enabled us to generate desired such animals more efficiently and rapidly. Our facility, Section of Mammalian Transgenesis, routinely generates a variety of genetically modified mice and rats according to requests from internal and external laboratories. In addition, we have developed novel reproductive and developmental technologies using early rodent embryos and stem cells. One of our current projects is an application of our techniques to regenerative medicine. Recently, as collaborative research, we have established "blastocyst complementation" method which can create a specific organ from pluripotent stem cells (PSCs) in organ-deficient animals. In addition, we have successfully induced functional germ cells from rat PSCs *in vitro*, leading to the birth of healthy offspring. Through developing new technologies and generating model animals in various mammalian species, we aim to understand the underlying mechanisms on stem cell self-renewal/differentiation, early embryo development and organogenesis, which would contribute to future regenerative medicine and reproductive medicine as well as life science research.

* M. Oikawa et al., Methods Mol Biol. 2770 (2024).
* K. Iwatsuki et al., Cell Rep Methods. 3, 100542 (2023).
* M. Oikawa et al., Science 376, 176 (2022).
* M. Oikawa et al., Mol Reprod Dev. 89, 129 (2022).
* T. Kobayashi et al., Cell Rep. 37, 109812 (2021).
* T. Kobayashi et al., Nat Commun. 12, 1328 (2021).

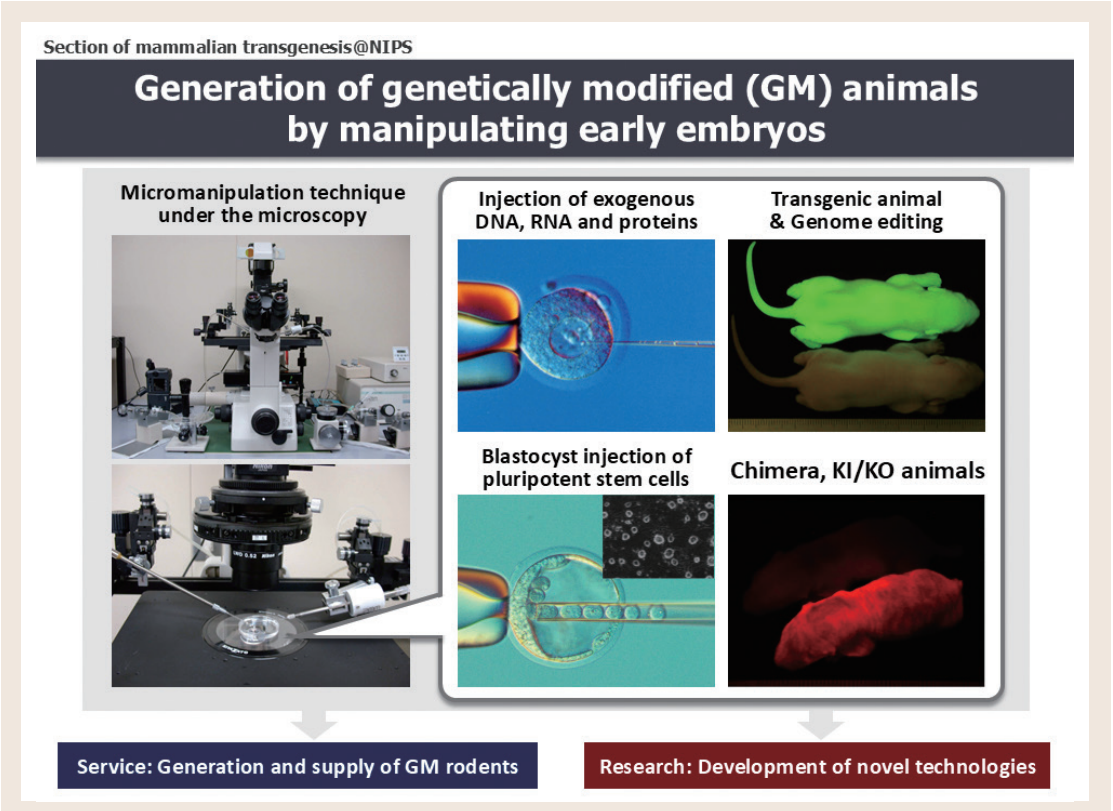

Fig. Generation of genetically modified animals. Under the microsope, early embryos and pluripotent stem cells are manually manipulated to generate transgenic animals, chimeras, and knock-in/-out animals.

▶ Section of Multilayer Physiology

NISHIJIMA, Kazutoshi
Professor
Laboratory Animal Science
Reproductive Technology
Metabolism

CHIKEN, Satomi
Assistant Professor
Neurophysiology
Neurobiology

In vivo analysis of neuronal and metabolic activity, and behavioral patterns in mice and rats

This section analyzes *in vivo* neuronal and metabolic activity, and behavioral patterns in mice and rats, which have been modified by their related genes and exposure to various environmental conditions.

This section performs the following examinations:

- Single unit recording from motor related brain regions in an awake state（Figure 1）.
- Behavioral analysis for the evaluation of learning and memory, and emotion: Morris water maze, Barnes maze, Fear conditioning, Passive avoidance, Rota-rod, Open field, Elevated plus maze, Light-dark transition, Forced swimming, Y maze, 3-chamber social interaction, etc. (Figure 2).
- Behavioral analysis under group housing using automated, remote monitoring system, IntelliCage.
- Regional neural activity detected as intrinsic signals with taking the advantage of light fluorescent dynamics of flavin or hemoglobin.
- Measurement of non-invasive echo-graphic imaging of tissue structure-function relationships (liver, kidney and blood vessels), 4-dimensional changes in cardiac functions, and capillary blood flow (brain and umbilical cord) using anesthetized mice.

* Polyakova et al. J Neurosci 44: e1911222024 (2024)
* Hasegawa et al. Nat Commun 13: 2233 (2022)
* Chiken et al. Cereb Cortex 31: 5363-5380 (2021)
* Dwi Wahyu I et al. J Neurosci 41: 2668-2683 (2021)
* Watanabe et al. Nat Commun 11: 3253 (2020)

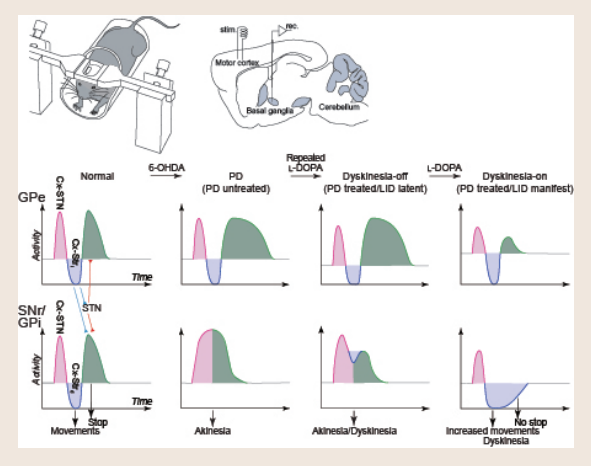

Figure 1. To elucidate pathophysiology of L-DOPA-induced dyskinesia, neuronal activity of basal ganglia neurons in response to electrical stimulation of the motor cortex was analyzed.

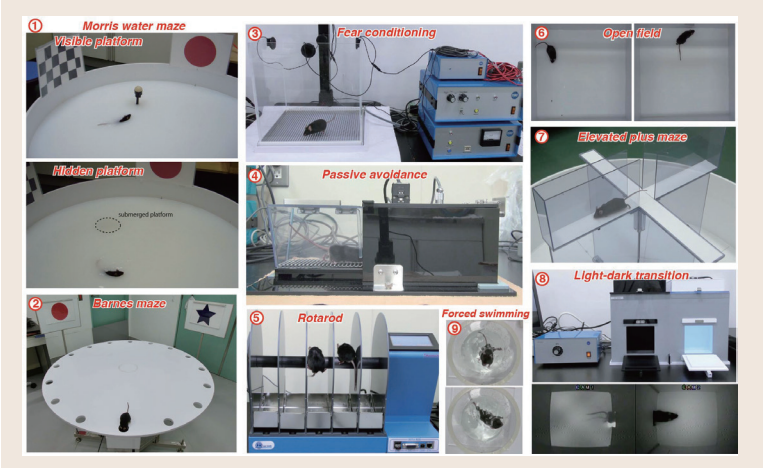

Figure 2. We perform a number of behavioral analyses in mice to explore physiological functions of specific genes and molecules.

▶ Section of Sensory Physiology

Elucidation of the Molecular Basis and Physiological Significance of Sensory Function, and the Development of Novel Pest Control Strategies

SOKABE, Takaaki
Associate Professor
Cellular and Molecular Biology
Sensory Physiology

SATO, Shoma
Project Assistant Professor
Neurogenetics
behavioral genetics

Our laboratory investigates the molecular mechanisms and physiological importance of sensory functions, which are crucial for biological adaptation and survival. We focus particularly on the functional relationship between membrane proteins like TRP channels and surrounding membrane lipids, studying how these components work cooperatively in sensory functions. Our research employs diverse tools ranging from behavioral analyses using *Drosophila* genetics to neuronal imaging and electrophysiological studies using receptor-expressing cultured cells.

We also study how oxidative stress affects membrane lipids and receptor function in aging and neurodegenerative conditions, using both *Drosophila* and mammalian cells to understand and develop treatments for sensory dysfunction. Additionally, we're developing next-generation pest control strategies by exploring novel repellents and insecticides targeting insect receptors and neural functions.

Our laboratory thus combines fundamental research into sensory processes with applied research addressing medical and agricultural challenges. We are also actively pursuing collaborative research and graduate education opportunities to facilitate these studies.

* K. Ohnishi et al., Bioessay, e202400233 (2024)
* K. Ohnishi et al., Nat. Commun. 15, 1660 (2024)
* S. Sato et al., Front. Mol. Neurosci. 16, 1249715 (2023)
* T. Sokabe et al., Sci. Signal. 15, eabl6179 (2022)
* T. Suito et al., Biosci. Biotechnol. Biochem. Zbac087 (2022)

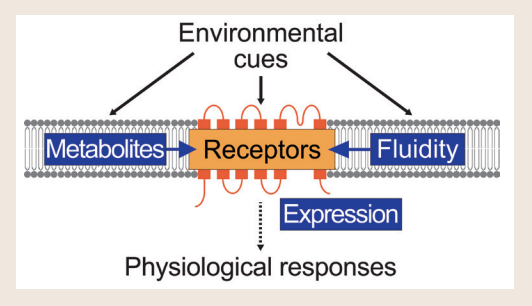

Figure 1: Sensory Mechanism Integrating Membrane Receptors and Lipids. The structure and function of sensory receptors in the cell membrane are maintained by surrounding lipids. Our laboratory has discovered that lipid metabolites and membrane lipids regulate receptor activity and expression through signal transduction and propagation of physicochemical properties of membranes. However, the functions of various membrane lipids remain largely unexplored.

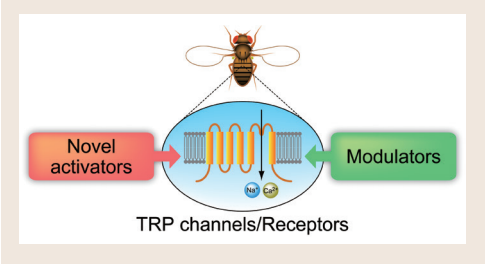

Figure 2: Development of Pest Control Strategies Targeting Insect Receptors. We are exploring and developing new compounds targeting TRP channels and neural ion channels, which play crucial roles in nociception and physiological regulation. These compounds are being investigated for their potential as repellents, insecticides, and disruptors of physiological functions. We are also analyzing receptor-modifying substances that can enhance the effectiveness of these compounds.

Center for Communication Networks

TAKEMURA, Hiromasa
Professor
Director

Outline

The Center for Communication Networks is responsible for disseminating information from the NIPS to society, maintaining the network, and managing information security at the NIPS. It is comprised of three distinct sections: (1) The Section of Research Archives, which is responsible for carrying out a variety of evaluation activities within the institute and overseeing the document exhibition room, (2) The Section of Physiology and Medicine Education, which is dedicated to promoting education and enlightenment on human physiology, and (3) The Section of Network Management, which oversees the provision and maintenance of various information network services, including email and web-based services, in addition to managing computer resources.

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▶ Section of Network Management 42

▶ Section of Research Archives

The Institute has made the self-evaluation and peer review every year since 1993. In addition, the Institute started editing a volume of annual plans and annual reports every year since 2004. The section was opened in 2007 to perform more efficient evaluation processes. For efficient accumulation of historical events in the institute, this section also takes care of archiving the documents that describe the activities of the Institute. The section was reorganized to be responsible for collecting and archiving various kinds of documents in 2016. The collection includes the database of documents related to the foundation of the Institute, which was completed owing to the great contribution of the late Professor Emeritus Shunichi Yamagishi. It also includes the text version of "Oral History" stated by the late Professor Yamagishi. At the 100th annual meeting of the physiological Society of Japan in 2022, the history of MIPS was introduced, and its materials were provided.

▶ Section of Network Management

Computer services and network supports are now indispensable for research activity. In this section, we manage the "Computer System for Data Analysis in Physiology", which is a software sharing system for Numeric Computation, data analysis, visualization and statistics. In addition, we support high-speed and reliable network for intra-/internet services such as E-mail communication, Web services, and peripheral devices for in-house information network. Technological developments for the best use of these facilities are also underway（Fig. 1）

Ensuring information security is also an important part of our work. We have revised our information security policy in line with our research and are making efforts to maintain the security level by raising awareness among users. In addition, we also cooperate with CSIRT to prevent security incidents, take countermeasures, monitor them, and respond to them when and after they occur.

Fig.1. Computer System for Data Analysis in Physiology & Network Servers

Section of Health and Safety Management

MURATA, Kazuyoshi
Project Professor
Structural biology
Electron Microscopy

Outline

Since its incorporation in 2004, the National Institute for Physiological Sciences has been working to ensure the safety and health of its staff, focusing on the workplace environment. To date, issues have arisen that require immediate attention, such as the designation of formaldehyde and propylene oxide as Class II specific chemical substances, the designation of ketamine as a narcotic drug, and an increase in laser equipment, and this has led to a need for rapid response to special health examinations. It is also important to prevent accidents and injuries before they occur. For this reason, in 2011, the Institute established the Safety and Health Management Office, which reports directly to the Director, and is carrying out the following duties:

1. Measures to prevent employee accidents and health problems
2. Education for employees on safety and health
3. Maintenance and promotion of health, including health checkups
4. Identification of causes of workplace accidents and prevention of recurrence

Regular management office meetings are held every month to report inspection results, discuss important matters, and promote safety management.

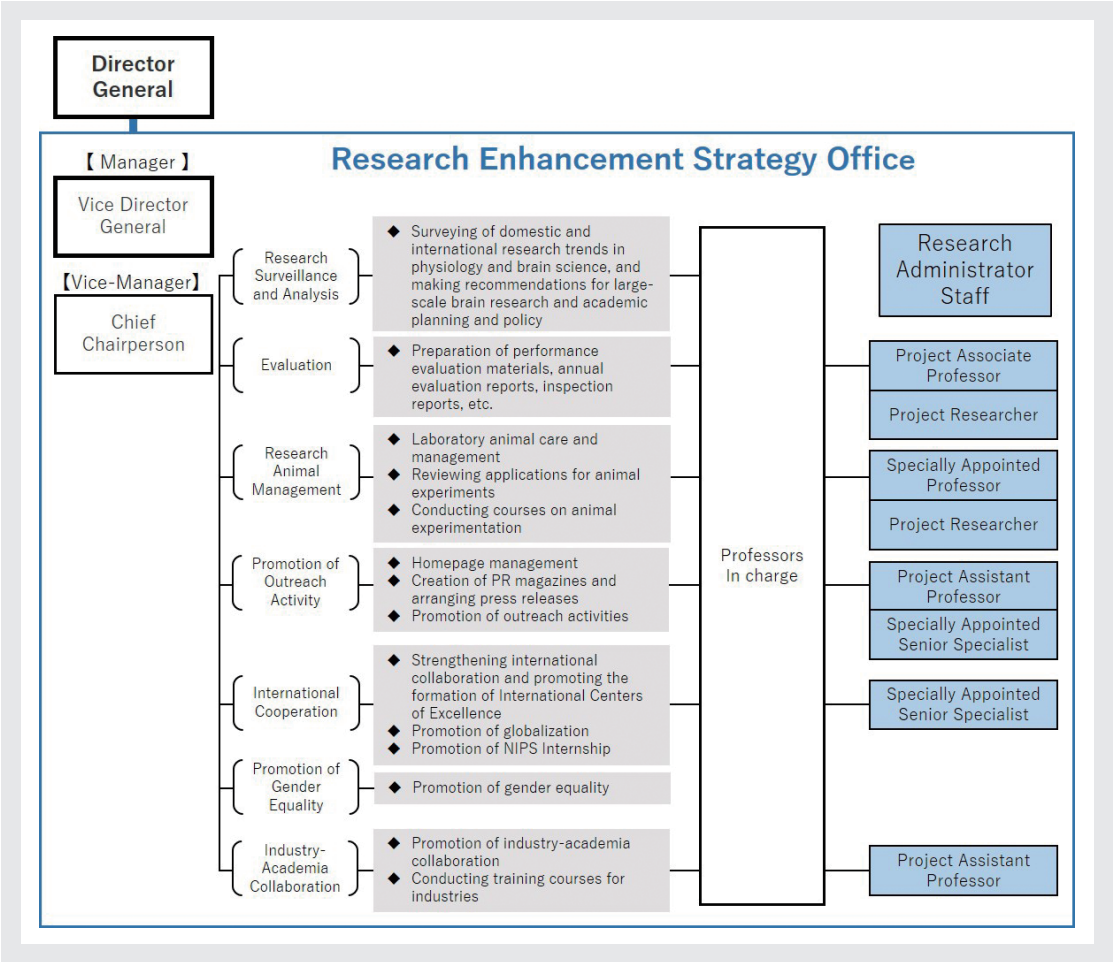
Since 2020, we have also been working on planning and implementing preventive measures against COVID-19. In May 2023, COVID-19 was downgraded from Class 2 to Class 5, and the outbreak came to an end, but the management office will continue to focus on preventing various infectious diseases.

Research Enhancement Strategy Office

Research Enhancement Promotion Project

National Institutes of Natural Sciences (NINS) has been selected as one of 20 Universities and 3 Inter-University Research Institutes in the Program for Promoting the Enhancements of Research Universities funded by Monbukagakusho (MEXT), which started from September 2013. Research Enhancement Promotion Headquarters and Research Enhancement Strategy Office of this program have been settled at NINS and each of the five Research Institutes, including NIPS. At NIPS, Research Enhancement Strategy Office (manager: vice-director general of NIPS) has been composed of seven units, 1) Research Surveillance and Analysis, 2) Evaluation, 3) Research Animal Management, 4) Promotion of Outreach Activity, 5) International Cooperation, 6) Promotion of Gender Equality, and 7) Industry-Academia Collaboration. Specially Appointed Professor, Project Associate and Assistant Professors are assigned to Research Surveillance and Analysis Unit, Evaluation Unit, Research Animal Management Unit, Promotion of Outreach Activity, Unit and Industry-Academia Collaboration Unit. Each unit promotes its activity to achieve the mission of NIPS.

The Program for Promoting the Enhancements of Research Universities funded by MEXT was over by the end of FY2022. From FY2023, NIPS covers the expenses to employ URA staffs by the internal budget. Although NIPS is in a difficult financial condition, NIPS plans to maintain employment of URA staffs which is indispensable for the promotion of the enhancement of research activities.



KITAJO, Keiichi
Professor
Computational Neuroscience
Cognitive Neuroscience

KUBO, Yoshihiro
Professor
Biophysics
Neurobiology

ISODA, Masaki
Professor
Neurophysiology

NISHIJIMA, Kazutoshi
Professor
Laboratory Animal Science
Reproductive Technology
Metabolism

YOSHIMURA, Yumiko
Professor
Neurophysiology

TAKEMURA, Hiromasa
Professor
Neuroimaging
Neuroscience
Vision Science

URANO, Toru
Specially Appointed Professor
Laboratory Animal Science
Bacterial Infectious Disease

MARUYAMA, Megumi
Project Associate Professor
Neurophysiology
Environmental Physiology

NISHIO, Akiko
Project Assistant Professor
Neurophysiology
Cognitive Neuroscience

HONDA, Yukiko
Project Assistant Professor
Neurophysiology

Technical Division

Outline

The Technical Division is an organization of technical staffs to support research activities in National Institute for Physiological Sciences（NIPS）. This organization is under the direction of the Director-General of NIPS. It is organized in a management system with Head, Assistant Head, Section Chief, Engineer, Unit Chief, Assistant Engineer, Assistant Unit Chief and Staff.

The division is composed of the technicians, who are covering a wide diversity of fields, such as electric circuitry, mechanical machine tooling, computing, gene engineering, biochemical analysis, cell culture, microscope, raising and reproduction of gene-implanted animals and so on.

The division is divided into two sections, one is for Departments and the other is for Research Centers. The personnel belonging to the Departments support mainly the researchers in the Departments. Those belonging to the Research Center or Laboratory are maintaining and controlling common research equipment for use in joint research projects by scientists of inside and outside of the institute.

In addition to these technical supports, the division is conducting common operations（maintenance and control of equipment, machinery and other installations, and management of research meeting and supply shops）.

Beside the division conducts self-study activities by organizing technical research meeting and by publishing technical reports, in order to improve the technical abilities of individual members. A technical committee is organized to allow the institute to obtain new technologies vital to the research and to dissolve technically challenging subjects.

Every year, "Operation Report Meeting" is held to promote the mutual understandings of technical operations and to exchange general information in the division.

The Annual Meeting of Technical Research is held for the purpose of exchanging technological information among technicians working in all universities and research institutes in the country. In the meeting, discussions are made through oral presentations, panel exhibitions and lectures with technical practice.

These study activities and technical research meetings conducted at the division are summarized and published in "Annual Report of Technical Division" and in "Annual Report of Technical Research Meeting."

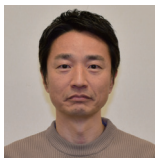
Head :
YOSHIMURA, Nobuaki

Assistant Head :
HIROE, Takeshi
Research Centers Technical Section

Section Chief :
ISHIHARA, Hiromi
Departments Technical Section

Unit Chief :
YAMAMOTO, Tomomi
Molecular & Cellular Physiology Technical Unit

Unit Chief :
FUKUTA, Naomi
Homeostatic Regulation Technical Unit



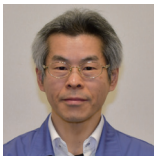
Unit Chief :
TAKAGI, Masahiro
Fundamental Neuroscience Technical Unit

Unit Chief :
YOKOI, Isao
Center for Research Collaboration Technical Unit

Unit Chief :
YOSHITOMO, Miki
Supportive Center for Brain Research Technical Unit Ⅰ

Unit Chief :
TAKAHASHI, Naoki
Supportive Center for Brain Research Technical Unit Ⅱ

Unit Chief :
SANBO, Makoto
Center for Genetic Analysis of Behavior Technical Unit



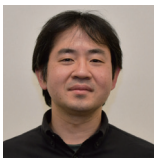
Unit Chief :
MURATA, Yasuhisa
Center for Communication Networks Technical Unit

Unit Chief :
KUBOTA, Mitsuko
Center for Experimental Animals Technical Unit

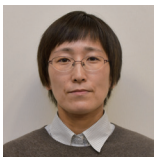
Unit Chief :
SATO, Shigeki
Research Infrastructure Technical Unit

Assistant Engineer :
KAMIYA, Emi
Center for Experimental Animals Technical Unit

Assistant Unit Chief :
KANO, Yuichiro
Homeostatic Regulation Technical Unit

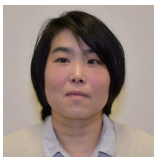


Assistant Unit Chief :
HIRAYAMA, Yuya
System Neuroscience Technical Unit

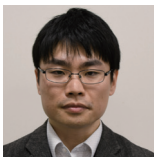


Assistant Unit Chief:
KAWAI, Yuko
Center for Research Collaboration Technical Unit

Assistant Unit Chief :
TAKAHASHI, Nobuaki
Center for Experimental Animals Technical Unit



Assistant Unit Chief :
YAMANAKA, Midori
Center for Experimental Animals Technical Unit



Assistant Unit Chief :
INAHASHI, Hiroki
Center for Experimental Animals Technical Unit

Staff :
WATAKABE, Yuki
Fundamental Neuroscience Technical Unit

Staff :
INAGAKI, Mariko
Center for Communication Networks Technical Unit

Staff :
FUJITA, Shogo
Center for Communication Networks Technical Unit

Exploratory Research Center on Life and Living Systems

Okazaki Institute for Integrative Bioscience ended in FY 2017.

A new research center "Exploratory Research Center on Life and Living Systems (ExCELLS)" was launched in FY 2018.

ExCELLS consists of 23 research groups, and the following 5 research groups also belong to the National Institute for Physiological Sciences.

- Cardiocirculatory Dynamism Research Group　Division of Cardiocirculatory Signaling (See P. 14)
- Biophotonics Research Group　Division of Biophotonics (See P. 19)
- Material-Life Boundary Research Group　Division of Structural Biology (See P. 11)
- Cognitive Genomics Research Group
- Thermal Biology Group

Center for Animal Resources and Collaborative Study

NISHIJIMA, Kazutoshi
Professor (Director)
Laboratory Animal Science
Reproductive Technology
Metabolism

URANO, Toru
Specially Appointed Professor
Laboratory Animal Science
Bacterial Infectious Disease

The Center for Animal Resources and Collaborative Study is one of the top-class experimental animal centers in Japan. The center was reorganized from the Center for Experimental Animals in FY2019 to further enhance collaborative study based on animal research as a common facility of the interuniversity institutes. In the terrestrial and aquatic animal sections, multiple species including mouse, rat, marmoset, Japanese macaque, fish, and amphibians are maintained and supplied for experimentation.

To enhance and support collaborative animal researches involving domestic and foreign researchers, the principal responsibilities of the center include (1) the appropriate breeding of rodents and other experimental animals, (2) embryo transfer and cryopreservation for genetically modified mouse lines, (3) development and refinement of diagnostic testing methods, microbial containment, and disease prevention strategies, (4) provision of information related to the techniques of animal experimentation as well as promotion of education and awareness with regard to ethical considerations and regulations related to the study of experimental animals. The new building in "Myodaiji" area, which is equipped with the state-of-the art system including individually ventilated cages rack and experimental rooms for collaboration studies, was completed in September, 2020. We are capable of supplying high quality animal care and resources to researchers to reach the best research achievements in the world.

Division of Coordinator for Animal Experimentation

NISHIJIMA, Kazutoshi
Professor
Laboratory Animal Science
Reproductive Technology
Metabolism

The Division was established in 2008 to support the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) covered with 3 Institutes in Okazaki (Current with National Institutes of Natural Sciences). The important role of animal-based research in the life science, especially physiological science field has been extensively increasing in the world.

On the other hand, it is needed to enhance the social transparency, ethics and animal welfare in the animal experiments based on several rules including 'Law for the humane treatment and management of animals', 'Standard relating to the Care and Management of laboratory animals and relief of pain', 'Fundamental guideline for proper conduct of animal experiment and related activities in academic research institutions under the jurisdiction of MECSST' and domestic Standard.

Accordingly, this Division is responsible for the following activities.

1. Education and training of the researchers
2. Review of the animal experiment plans
3. Self-evaluation and self-assessment of animal experiments
4. Information disclosure regarding animal-based research

We are also doing enlightenment activities in our own homepage.

Core for Spin Life Sciences, Okazaki Collaborative Platform

ISA, Tadashi
Director General
Neurophysiology

SADATO, Norihiro
Project Professor
Functional Neuroimaging
Neuroscience

TAKEMURA, Hiromasa
Professor
Neuroimaging
Neuroscience
Vision Science

FUKUNAGA, Masaki
Project Professor
Magnetic Resonance
Neuroimaging
Neuroscience

MARUYAMA, Megumi
Project Associate Professor
Neurophysiology
Environmental Physiology

GODA, Naokazu
Assistant Professor
Neuroscience
Neuroimaging
Psychophysics

LUO, Junxiang
Assistant Professor
Neuroimaging
Neuroscience
Vision Science

OISHI, Hiroki
Assistant Professor
Neuroimaging
Neuroscience

YAMAMOTO, Tetuya
Project Assistant Professor
(Grant Project)
Neuroimaging
Visual Neuroscience
Visual Psychology

Establishment of a new interdisciplinary MR research hub integrating molecular science, life science, and physiology.

In July 2024, the National Institute for Physiological Sciences, together with the Institute for Molecular Science and the Exploratory Research Center on Life and Living Systems, established the "Core for Spin Life Sciences, Okazaki Collaborative Platform." With the primary goal of exploring new frontiers where molecular science, life science, and physiology converge, this "Core for Spin Life Sciences" serves as a novel research hub in the field of spin life sciences. Here is built upon the fundamental technology of Magnetic Resonance (MR) technology and a collective of researchers with diverse specializations.

Specifically, we will develop new principles and methods for MR measurement in vivo, from the development of new molecular probes for MR to MR image measurement in model animals, all in an integrated manner in the Okazaki area.

The "Core for Spin Life Sciences" has also established a new joint usage/research network, "Frontier of Spin Life Sciences (Spin-L)," in the field of spin life sciences through partnerships with four node institutions: the Joint Usage/Research Centers of the Institute for Chemical Research (Kyoto University), the Institute for Protein Research (Osaka University), and the Brain Research Institute (Niigata University), and the Institute for Quantum Life Science (National Institutes for Quantum Science and Technology). And Spin-L, a ten-year project focusing on the creation and growth of spin life sciences, launched FY 2023.

Spin-L will carry out the following three missions.

1. Strengthening the education and training of researchers and engineers.
2. Promoting novel integrated research.
3. Encouraging the engagement of researchers.

The main activities in FY 2024 were: as a human resources development project, we supported the overseas research of two Ph.D. students from the participating institutions, and held a retreat organized and led by the "Associates of next-generation researchers of Spin-L," which was established by early-career researchers and engineers from the participating institutions. In addition, interdisciplinary training courses and interdisciplinary study groups were held to promote interaction among researchers in different fields. In terms of research activities, a total of 78 joint usage/research projects were carried out using the Spin-L network. To further our initiative, we have created new Visiting Departments within the “Core for Spin Life Sciences” specifically to advance our unique project research, which is a form of “Project based - collaborative research”. These Visiting Departments will welcome outstanding researchers from related fields within the research community as visiting principal investigators (PIs) and project faculty members, and will get started in earnest from FY 2025.

NIPS Research Fellow

The NIPS Research Fellows are young researchers with advanced research capabilities through operational expense subsidies for a certain period in order to have them be engaged in specific joint research projects, and to develop and promote research activities.

SAKUERAI, Jun
Division of Cell Structure
Developmental Biology
Cell Biology

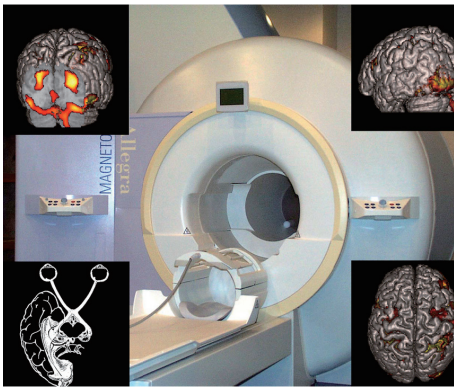
TAKAMIYA, Shogo
Division of Visual Information Processing
Neuroscience

Large facilities and equipments for cooperative studies

Outline

As a mission to be the inter-university research institute, NIPS conducts joint studies with researchers from domestic or foreign universities and other research institutes. NIPS provides specialized equipment, large-scale equipment, and research facilities, and develops new equipment for morphological and functional 4D imaging ｓ of various organs such as the brain.

▶ Magnetic Resonance Imaging System (MRI: 3 tesla, 7 tesla)

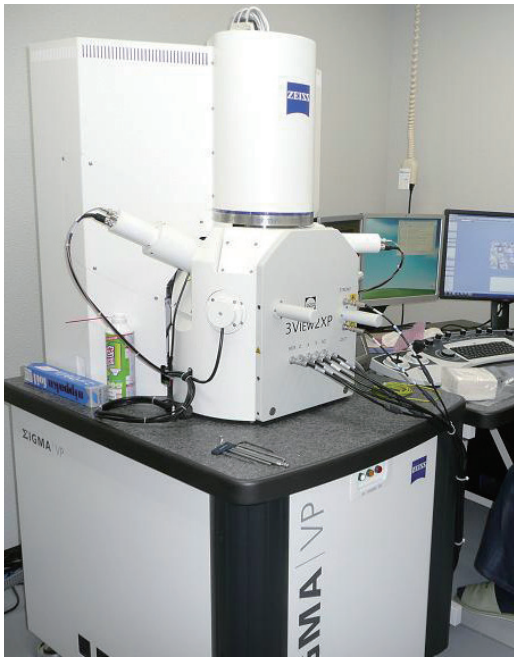


MRI is an imaging technique that utilizes the nuclear magnetic resonance of the hydrogen and other atoms. MRI enables not only detailed structural imaging on the brain, but also the localization of brain function by measuring regional cerebral blood flow (functional MRI). To simultaneously measure the brain activities of two participants during their social interaction, the NIPS have installed a dual-functional MRI system with two 3T MRIs (Siemens Magnetom Verio). Furthermore, an ultra-high field (7T) MRI system (Siemens Magnetom 7T) has been installed on 2014. In fiscal year 2023, we also installed a 3T MRI system with strong gradient (Siemens Magnetom Cima.X). The NIPS provides these MRI facilities for cooperative studies.

▶ Electron Cryomicroscopy

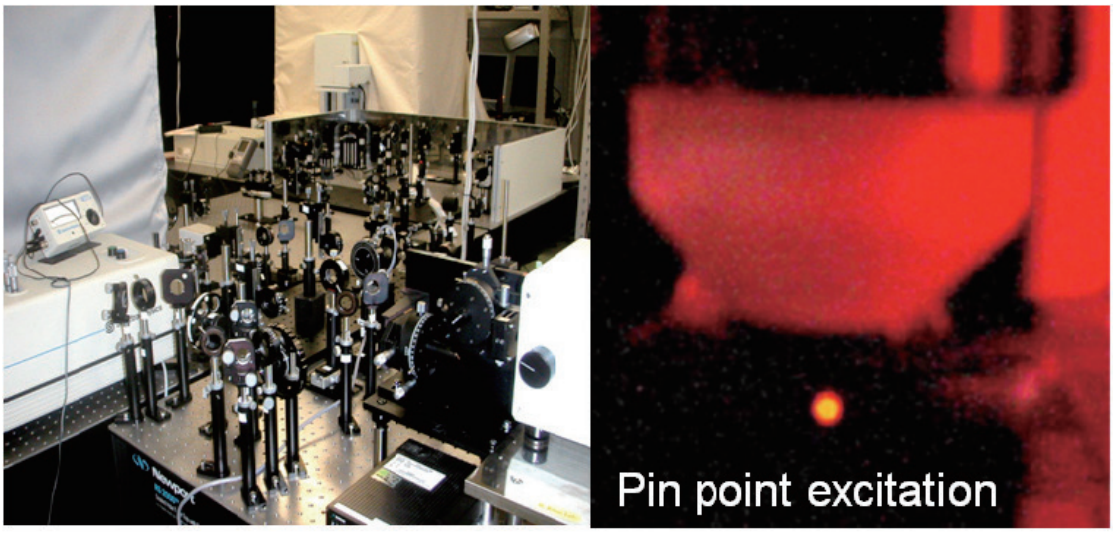
Electron cryomicroscope is an electron microscope developed for observing close-to-life state biological samples with a combination of rapid freezing and ice embedding sample preparation methods. Biological specimens up to 200 nm thicknesses can be observed with high-resolution and high-contrast. Ultrastructure analyses of protein molecules, viruses, bacteria, cultured cells, and frozen tissue sections are performed with this novel microscopic system.

▶ Serial Block-Face Scanning Electron Microscope (SBF-SEM)



Serial block-face scanning electron microscope (SBF-SEM) is an advanced 3-D nano-imaging equipment. Two different types of SBF-SEM are available; high-resolution and wide-area types. Resin-embedded biological specimens are sliced by a diamond knife equipped inside the chamber, and the block-face images are acquired by scanning electron microscopy (SEM). 3-D structures of the specimens are finally reconstructed from the acquired serial block-face images. 3-D structures of large biological specimens like brain tissue can be visualized at the resolution of several nanometers.

▶ Multiphoton excitation microscopy



Multi-photon excitation is a method to visualize living tissue by exciting the fluorescence molecules with the tightly focused near-infrared femtosecond pulse laser. Since the longer wavelength is used for multi-photon excitation, it has a superior deeper tissue penetration and reduced phototoxicity compared with single-photon excitation. Our 2-photon microscopes have the top-level specification for deep tissue imaging and can be applied to the imaging of neurons and glial cells in deep tissues such as the mouse brain. Recently, we also developed a 2-photon fluorescence imaging microscope that can be applied to image protein-protein interaction and the protein activity.

▶ Analytical equipment for in vivo neuronal, metabolic, and physiological parameters in mice

We analyze the following physiological parameters in mice:

(A) Evaluation of behaviors related to emotions, learning, and memories, and analyses of neural and muscular activities, (B) Non-invasive 4D cardiac function and capillary blood flow ultrasound imaging in mice, (C) Functional analysis of neuroimmune interactions in mouse models of diseases, (D) Multicellular activity measurement and manipulation in vivo, (E) Physiological measurements and analysis in vivo.

[Major apparatuses] Brain wave–measuring apparatus, Electromyograph, Telemetry automatic measurement system for chronic experiments, 4D ultrasound imaging device VEVO3100, Isolated heart perfusion system, Open field test analyzer, Light/dark transition test device, Barnes circular maze test device, Elevated plus-maze test analyzer, Forced swimming test analyzer, Rota-rod test analyzer, Passive avoidance test analyzer, Fear conditioning test analyzer, Morris water maze pool, IntelliCage: group-housed automated high-throughput behavioral and cognitive screening system, Nikon A1MP+ holographic microscope, The head-mounted miniature microscope, X-ray irradiation device, silicon CMOS digital neural probe.

Facilities Shared by the Two Institutes

Outline

National Institute for Physiological Sciences and National Institute for Basic Biology are sharing facilities which are innovative for conducting biological researches, but rather expensive to be supported only by one institution.

▶ Section of Electron Microscopy

See P. 33

▶ Instrument Design Room

Custom-designed equipments, which are not commercially available, can be constructed in this room. The machine shop is equipped with various types of machines such as milling machines and drill presses. A small laser cutting machine also work, and laboratory equipment can be manufactured. The electronic shop is equipped with various types of test instruments used for construction and measurement calibration of electronic devices.

Machine shop equipments（Instrument Design Room）

▶ Trans-Omics Facility

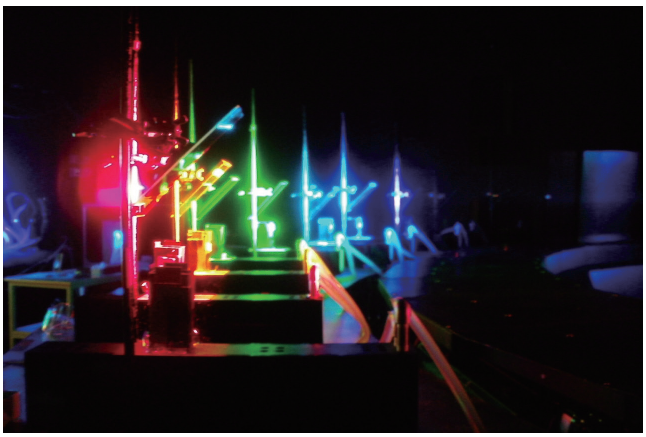
The Trans-Omics Facility is a division of NIBB Trans-Scale Biology Center and organized jointly by NIBB and NIPS for promoting DNA and protein studies. The facility maintains a wide array of core research equipments, from standard machinery like ultracentrifuges to cutting edge tools such as next generation DNA sequencers, which amount to 70 different kinds of instruments. Our current focus is supporting functional genomics works that utilize mass spectrometers and DNA sequencers.

Next generation DNA sequencers (Trans-Omics Facility)

▶ Optics and Imaging Facility

The Optics and Imaging Facility manages the optical equipment, such as optical microscopes, including confocal laser microscopes and two-photon microscopes, and the Okazaki Large Spectrograph. We also hold technical seminars and training sessions about microscopes and bioimaging to provide useful information to our users.

Okazaki Large Spectrograph (Optics and Imaging Facility)



Joint Researches

Outline

The National Institute for Physiological Sciences (NIPS), an inter-university research institute, carries out general collaborative research, planned collaborative research that focuses on the most critical theme, and cooperative research using large facilities.

Many collaborative studies are conducted each year and have produced promising results. In 2025, the institute plans to carry out 150 general and planned collaborative projects and 32 cooperative studies by functional imaging.

Another of the principal pillars of corporative studies at NIPS is the NIPS research meeting. Unlike normal academic meetings, here, most of these meetings include oral presentations, giving plenty of time for Q&A. The small number of participants also allows detailed discussions to take place. Twenty meetings are planned for this year. The number of NIPS research meetings greatly outnumbers those hosted by the other two research institutes in Okazaki, and in fact, they have become a highly important base organization. In the past, the meetings have helped establish new scientific research-funded study groups, and have even established activities such as academic conferences. The NIPS International Workshop has been running since 2008. Research meetings are inviting overseas researchers, who present their work in English, have shown positive potential for the future of science. In 2025, one International Workshop is scheduled.

1. General collaborative project

The general collaborative projects and planned collaborative projects involve studies carried out by researchers from outside universities or research institutes, and professors or associate professors from within NIPS. In 2025, 57 projects have been selected as part of a move to raise the number of cooperative studies.

2. Planned collaborative project

Planned collaborative project themes are selected by NIPS based on requests from researchers. These themes cover the most current and highly discussed scientific topics, in areas where NIPS is considered to be a frontrunner in Japan.

Regarding the proposed agenda, extensive discussions have been carried out at faculty meetings and work meetings. The agreed requirements are as follows.

1) Proposals should clearly state the aim and experimental design of the research project and should be completed within five years. However, depending on the state of the research, an extension period may be granted after the initial five years.
2) Proposals should specifically state the research area of interest. Broad themes will not be accepted.
3) There will be a limit to the number of proposals accepted. Each general collaborative research area category and research facility will accept five projects each at most, in principle.

The details of the planned collaborative research are as follows.

In accordance with the renovation and reorganization of the Animal Resource Center, starting in FY2022, the following items have been transferred to the Center's planned joint research projects.

(1) Production of advanced animal models (until FY2021, this project has been conducted as "1) Physiological and neuroscientific analysis of genetically modified model animals", a joint research project planned by the National Institute for Physiological Sciences).
(2) Analysis of metabolic physiology for mice and rats.

In addition, "Behavioral and neural activity analysis of macaque monkeys" was started in 2024.

Planned collaborative projects (Animal Resource Center)

"Production of animal models"

Since genetically modified model animals are extremely effective for gene function analysis at the individual level, they are widely used in the field of life sciences. The recent engineering required to create such model animals has taken huge leaps forward; e.g., a new genome-editing tool (CRISPR/Cas9 system) can relatively easily cut arbitrary sequences on the genome. Section of Mammalian Transgenesis at the Center for Genetic Analysis of Behavior in Animal Resource Center has established the latest technology such as the CRISPR/Cas9 system capable of providing an endogenous genetic modification to mice and rats. Our staff familiar with not only physiology and brain science but also reproductive biotechnology, have greatly contributed to researchers all across the country by providing technology to create genetically modified model animals. We can support cooperative studies by providing the technologies to develop adoptive models such as transgenic or knock-out mice and rats. We will continue to work on the requested creation of genetically modified model animals by applying the new genome-editing tools. Fourteen projects are now scheduled for 2025.

"Analysis of metabolic physiology for mice and rats"

The Section of Multilayer Physiology of the Center for Genetic Analysis of Behavior provides analysis methods for the following topics using genetically modified

animals generated by researchers both within and outside NIPS.

(A) Evaluation of behaviors related to emotions, learning, and memories, and analyses of neural and muscular activities
(B) Non-invasive 4D cardiac function and capillary blood flow ultrasound imaging in mice
(C) Functional analysis of neuroimmune interactions in mouse models of diseases
(D) Multicellular activity measurement and manipulation in vivo
(E) Physiological measurements and analysis in vivo

Twenty projects are now scheduled in 2025.

"Behavioral and neural activity analysis of macaque monkeys"

Using macaque monkeys as model animals, we will mainly evaluate social behavior and measure and analyze social-related neural activity. Two projects are now scheduled in 2025.

Planned collaborative projects (National Institute for Physiological Sciences)

"Ultrastructure analysis of biological specimens by cutting-edge electron microscopy"

One cryo-electron microscope (cryo-TEM) and two serial block-face scanning electron microscopes (SBF-SEMs) are mainly used for this joint research program. Cryo-TEM shows the best performance when combined with a rapid-freezing sample preparation method. Under this condition, it is possible to study three-dimensional structures of unstained biological specimens, including isolated proteins, viruses, bacteria, cultured cells, and tissues, to more or less their true state with higher resolution. On the other hand, SBF-SEMs are used for the studies of ultrastructural analysis of thick biological specimens, like brain tissue. The specimens embedded in the plastic resin are sliced by a diamond knife and imaged by SEM continuously. Finally, the three-dimensional ultrastructure of the specimens is rebuilt at dozens of nanometer resolutions. The program support studies by using these states of the art electron microscopes. Twenty-three projects are now scheduled in 2025.

"Functional and morphological analyses of cells and tissues by multi-photon excitation microscopy"

A two-photon excitation fluorescence microscope is a less invasive method for studying the microscopic structure and functions of cells in deep tissues of biological organisms. Currently, our institute has three upright two-photon excitation microscopes, and these allow us to observe the structure in the depth of one millimeter with a spatial resolution of a micrometer. Since the maintenance of a two-photon microscope is complicated, NIPS is the only institute that can provide the opportunity for collaborative research with a high-quality experience. Furthermore, we recently build the two-photon fluorescence lifetime microscope system which enables us to observe the intermolecular interactions and the activity of signaling protein in a living cell in the deep tissue. We are also working on single-molecule imaging using quantum dots in a combination of a fluorescence microscope. Using these "cutting-edge methods," we have conducted collaborative research. Recent successes are particularly in vivo Ca^{2+} imaging, and long-term imaging of neurons in living mice. Two planned collaborative projects are scheduled in 2025.

"Development and supply of viral vectors and gene-transfer to primates"

Advances in technology to control molecular functions or change neural activity by inserting certain genes into primate brains using virus vectors can lead to major possibilities. Getting to do such research, however, requires a long list of equipment and facilities to enable researchers to develop do things such as develop vectors, or insert vectors. A planned collaborative research project "Transfection study with primates" was launched in 2012 so that researchers could share their resources, and work together to unravel mysteries about higher brain functions and pathological conditions. Viral vectors are useful, not only for primates but also for other animals. Thus, we are working on the application of the vectors to non-primate animals, such as rodents.

The Section of Viral Vector Development promotes collaboration with many laboratories by providing various serotypes of AAV vectors, conventional lentiviral vectors, and highly efficient retrograde gene transfer vectors. Moreover, we proceed with the collaboration to exploit the more advantageous viral vectors. Sixteen projects are now scheduled in 2025.

"Multidimensional fluorescence imaging analysis by multipoint scanning microscopy"

We conduct joint-use research based on our originally developed multipoint scanning confocal and two-photon microscopy method. In particular, quantitative visualization analysis of cellular physiological functions, including biological rhythms, will be performed by high-speed 3D, ultra-long term, multi-color, and super-resolution observation. Four projects are scheduled in 2025.

"Elucidation of the pathology of mental/neurological disease by analysis of neural activity dynamics"

To study the relationship between human and animal neural activity dynamics and the pathology of various mental and neurological diseases by combining unit recording, local field potentials (LFPs), electrocorticography (ECoG), scalp electroencephalography (scalp EEG), functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), and magnetoencephalography (MEG) are utilized in a multi-layered manner. In particular, we analyze neural activity dynamics such as vibration, synchronization, and

fluctuation. Nine projects are now scheduled in 2025.

"Visualization of white matter fiber bundles and brain microstructure by analyzing brain imaging data"

We conduct collaborative research to visualize microstructures in white matter fiber bundles, cortical gray matter regions, and neuronal nuclei by analyzing human or animal brain tructural images acquired using MRI and other techniques. Three projects are now scheduled in 2025.

3. NIPS research meeting

NIPS research meeting gathers leading researchers focused on specific themes, facilitating active discussions. These meetings contribute to the initiation of new collaborative research, the formation of researcher communities, and the discovery of cross-disciplinary research seeds. Some research meetings have even led to the establishment of Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) research areas.

Due to the widespread adoption of online conferencing systems resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, research meetings since 2023 have been conducted not only in person but also in hybrid formats combining online and in-person participation. Furthermore, by holding NIPS research meetings outside Okazaki, we aim to contribute to the universities and physiological research communities in the vicinity of the meeting venues. In 2025, 20 meetings are scheduled, with five of these planned to be held outside the NIPS.

4. NIPS International Workshop

To further internationalize and enhance the NIPS research meetings, we support the 'NIPS International Workshop,' which invites researchers from overseas. In 2025, one International Workshop is scheduled.

5. Cooperative study by functional imaging

The NIPS supports the measurement of brain structure and function in humans and nonhuman primates using 3- and 7-tesla MRI equipment. For this purpose, the NIPS sets up two research categories: "non-destructive three-dimensional observation of living organisms" and "structure and energy state observation of organic activity, including brain activators." By systematically establishing a series of methods ranging from experimental planning to image data collection and image statistical processing, the NIPS provides a high-quality research environment that goes beyond simply sharing equipment. In 2025, 32 studies are scheduled to be carried out.

International Exchanges

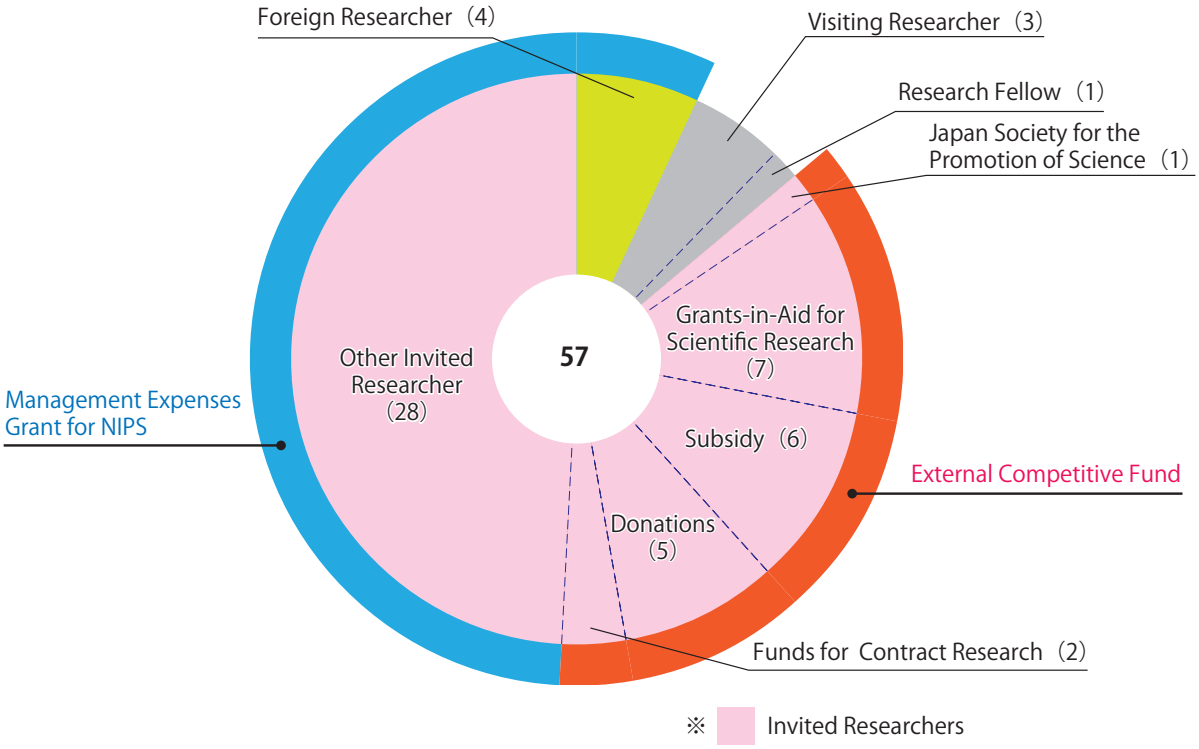
NIPS is an internationally recognized research institution and active international exchanges are performed. NIPS has the positions of foreign research staff, and world top-class researchers have engaged in research collaboration so far using this framework. Besides the research collaboration, visiting professors contribute to education of young researchers. In FY2014, NIPS started the Section of International Collaborative Research Project, which is run for 3 years by an adjunctive foreign professor as a Principal Investigator (P.I.). From FY2023, Dr. Andrew Moorhouse in University of New South Wales Sydney (from Feb 2025, University of Sydney) (Australia) is serving as an adjunctive foreign professor and run a lab as a P.I., focusing on the brain function from the circuit level. Also, many foreign students enter Physiological Sciences Course of SOKENDAI as graduate students and engage in research actively.

One of the main international exchange activities at NIPS is the annual international symposium. A NIPS professor serves as an organizer, and leading researchers from abroad and Japan are invited. In 2024, The 54th NIPS International Symposium entitled "Frontiers in Neural Circuit Reorganization Regulation and Pathophysiology" was held on site inviting 13 overseas speakers and 8 domestic speakers (Organizers: Professors Junichi Nabekura and Hiroaki Wake). In FY2025, two NIPS International Symposia are planned to be held (Organizer: Professor Tomomi Nemoto; Organizer: Professor Yoshihiro Kubo).

NIPS has an academic contract or a memorandum of understanding for academic interaction (MOU) with foreign institutions as follows, and is actively conducting joint academic activities including collaborative researches. The institutions are Korea University College of Medicine, Yonsei University College of Medicine and College of Dentistry (Korea); Tübingen University, Werner Reichardt Center for Integrative Neuroscience (Germany); Chulalongkorn University (Thailand); University of New South Wales, Faculty of Medicine (Australia); Neurospin (France); and McGill University (Canada). In FY2024, a joint symposium with Yonsei University College of Medicine and College of Dentistry, and Korea University College of Medicine was held in Yonsei University. NIPS sent 25 researchers including graduate students.

Besides these, many international research collaborations of high quality are performed at the individual researchers' level, supported by the budget of NIPS as well as NINS and also research grant from outside.

Number of Foreign Researchers (2024)



The 54th NIPS International Symposium

The 54th NIPS International Symposium
“Frontiers in Neural Circuit Reorganization Regulation and Pathophysiology”

The 54th NIPS (National Institute for Physiological Sciences) International Symposium was held onsite at the Okazaki Conference Center from October 23 to 25, 2024. The symposium was organized by Director Junichi Nabekura, with the support of Professor Hiroaki Wake (Division of Multicellular Circuit Dynamics) and Associate Professor Madoka Narushima (Division of Homeostatic Development).

The theme of this symposium focused on neuronal circuit reorganization—one of the key mechanisms underlying changes in brain function during development, learning, and various neurological disorders. Discussions centered on three major topics: the emerging roles of glial cells, GABAergic circuits, which functions undergo dynamic changes during development and disease, and the pathophysiology of chronic pain as a representative circuit disorder. Leading international researchers gathered to present cutting-edge findings and introduce state-of-the-art experimental and analytical techniques.

The symposium featured a total of 21 speakers, including 13 from overseas (United States: 5, South Korea: 3, Germany: 2, France: 1, Finland: 1, China: 1) and 8 from Japan. While two international speakers gave their talks online due to unavoidable circumstances, all presentations delivered valuable insights from the forefront of neuroscience research. In a special lecture, Dr. J.W. Lichtman—renowned for his work in connectomics using electron microscopy—shared novel findings on cortical circuitry in the human brain.

Poster presentations by numerous early-career researchers also contributed to the symposium’s success, encouraging active discussions and fostering interactions with leading scientists. These exchanges provided important opportunities for the development of the next generation of researchers.

The social gathering held during the symposium further promoted communication between invited speakers and researchers/ graduate students at NIPS. Many participants noted the high value of holding the event onsite, highlighting the importance of face-to-face interaction in facilitating meaningful scientific dialogue and collaboration.

NIPS International Workshop

"Exploring and understanding large-scale brain dynamics by data-driven approaches"

The NIPS International Workshop was held in person at the Okazaki Conference Center over two days, from July 22 to 23, 2024. Associate Professor Hiromichi Tsukada (Chubu University, Center for Mathematical Science and Artificial Intelligence) served as the principal organizer, and Professor Keiichi Kitajo from the Division of Neural Dynamics at NIPS was the internal representative.

The symposium's theme focused on data-driven neural dynamics research. In recent years, there has been a rapid global increase in observational and measurement data related to brain activity. These datasets encompass a wide range of organisms, from rodents and monkeys to humans, and span various scales, from whole-brain to molecular levels. Enhanced computational capabilities have enabled the mathematical modeling of nonlinear brain dynamics through data-driven approaches, facilitating deeper insights into their functional roles.

The international workshop aimed to advance research in data-driven dynamics by inviting leading international and domestic researchers to discuss future research approaches. There was also a vigorous exchange of opinions regarding potential applications of these approaches in psychiatric and neurological disorders, including dementia. A total of nine speakers delivered presentations, including two from overseas research institutions (Dr. Demian Battaglia from the University of Strasbourg in France and Dr. Joana Cabral from the University of Minho in Portugal), with the remaining seven speakers from Japanese institutions. Additionally, 48 participants registered, including speakers. The symposium featured lectures by renowned researchers and provided opportunities for poster presentations by young researchers and students. This created valuable interactions with internationally recognized scholars and stimulated researchers, especially younger individuals, within the relevant fields.

The Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI)

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on promoting innovative research and pioneering the exploration of new fields in academia, highlighting the urgent need for the cultivation of highly creative and advanced researchers to support these endeavors. Furthermore, with the internationalization of academic research and the development of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies beyond traditional academic boundaries, researchers are required to possess a broad perspective and international outlook. Under close collaboration and cooperation with inter-university research institutes of outstanding research capabilities, the Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI) was established in October 1988 as a graduate university to conduct advanced and internationally accessible education and research. Since April 1989, it has admitted graduate students, with the aim to nurture creative researchers with a broad perspective capable of leading new trends in academic research.

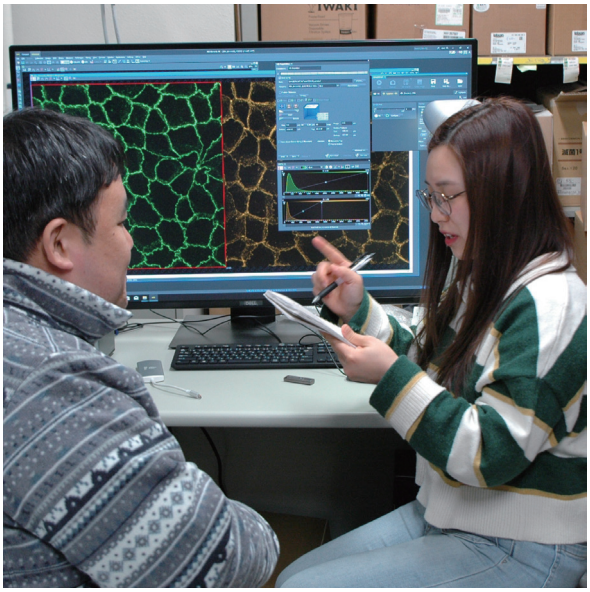
National Institute for Physiological Sciences has constituted School of Life Science at SOKENDAI along with National Institute for Basic Biology and National Institute of Genetics, and has been responsible for graduate education in Department of Physiological Sciences. As of April 2023, SOKENDAI has eliminated the boundaries of traditional research frameworks and transitioned into one graduate school, Graduate Institute for Advanced Studies, with 20 programs equivalent to the former departments.

The outline of Physiological Sciences Program

In this program, we are training researchers to study the functions of the body at various levels. Physiology plays a central role in integrating various fields of basic medicine while sharing a common basis with life sciences in general, and deeply relates to various fields of clinical medicine. Following the original principles of physiology, this program provides education and research guidance to investigate the functions of the body comprehensively, from the level of molecules, its constitutive elements, to the level of individuals as systems. Our aim is to cultivate a broad perspective spanning medicine and life sciences in general.

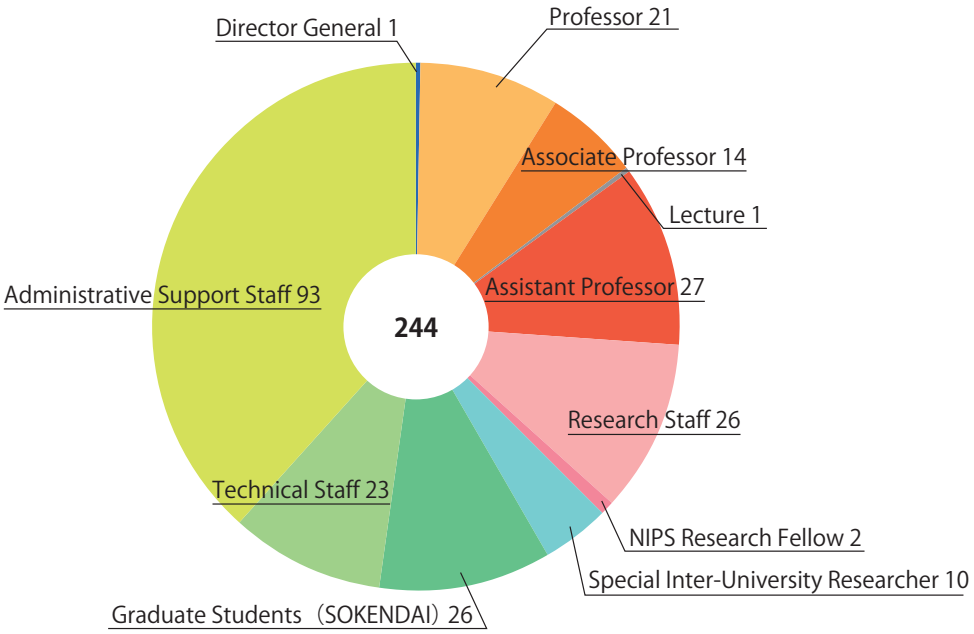
Number of graduate students enrolled by year

fiscal year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of enrolled students (international students)	30(14)	37(11)	39(13)	37(11)	28(9)	24(9)
Number of students admitted	6	14	8	5	4	8



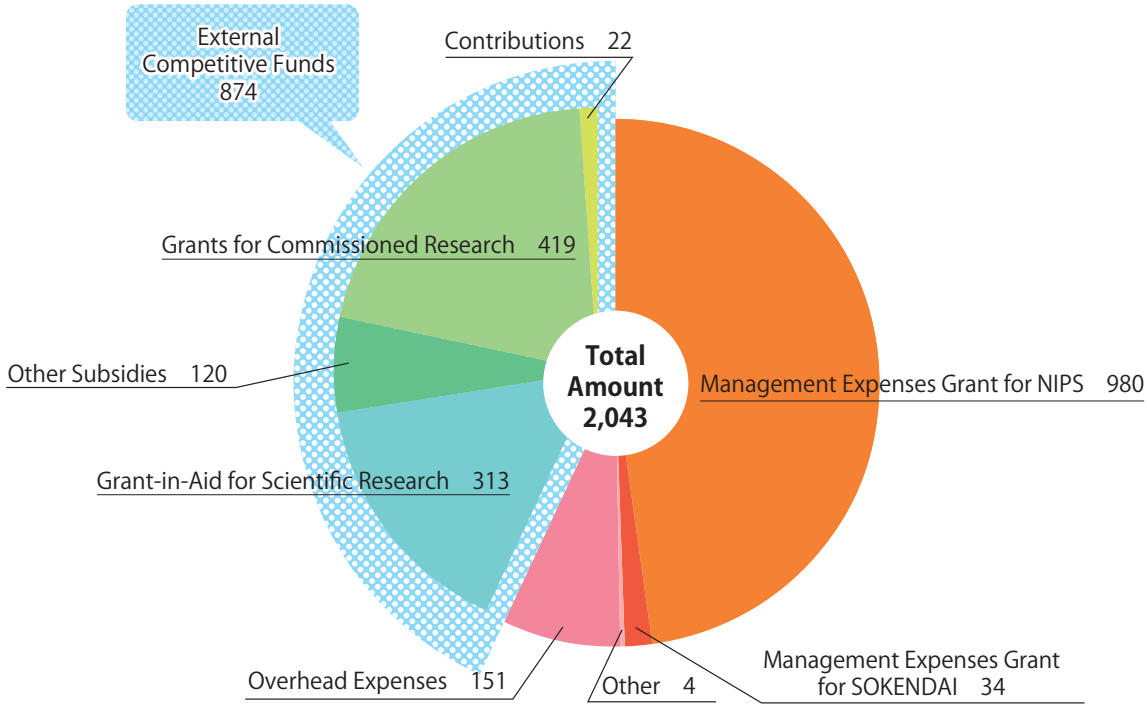
Current State

Staffs



Budget

numbers are in million yen/As of May, 2024



The budget consists of grants from the government (Management Expenses Grants・SOKENDAI Research Grants) as well as many competitive funds (Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Funds for Contract Research etc.) which are awarded by competitive selection process.

Common Facilities in Okazaki

▶ Okazaki Library and Information Center

Okazaki Library and Information center collects, organizes, and stores books, journals, and other materials related to basic biology, physiology, and molecular science, and makes them available to the staff of the three Okazaki institutes and Exploratory Research Center on Life and Living Systems, as well as to collaborating researchers.

<main function>

1. 24hours use by The IDENTIFICATION CARD
2. Information retrieval service
   （Web of Science, SCOPUS, etc.）
3. Books Loan service
4. Interlibrary Loan・Photocopy Request

▶ Okazaki Conference Center

Okazaki Conference Center was founded on February, 1996 to promote international and domestic conference program of research and education.

Ohsumi Conference Hall（capacity of 208）
Conference Room B（capacity of 112）
Conference Room C（2 rooms, capacity of 50 each）

Ohsumi Conference Hall

▶ Accommodation

The lodging houses (Mishima Lodge and Myodaiji Lodge) are provided for guests, both foreign and domestic, for the common use of the three Institutes (NIPS, NIBB and IMS).

Myodaiji Lodge

The lodging capacities are as follows :

	Single Room	Twin Room	Family Room
Mishima Lodge	60	14	12
Myodaiji Lodge	14	—	3

▶ The Sakura Nursery School

The Sakura nursery school is the institutional child care facility established for supporting both research and child-rearing. The school accept a child from the 57th day of after the birth, and is supporting a researcher's smooth return to research activity.

Age: From the 57th day of after the birth to 3 years old at the end of the fiscal year

Capacity: 18 persons

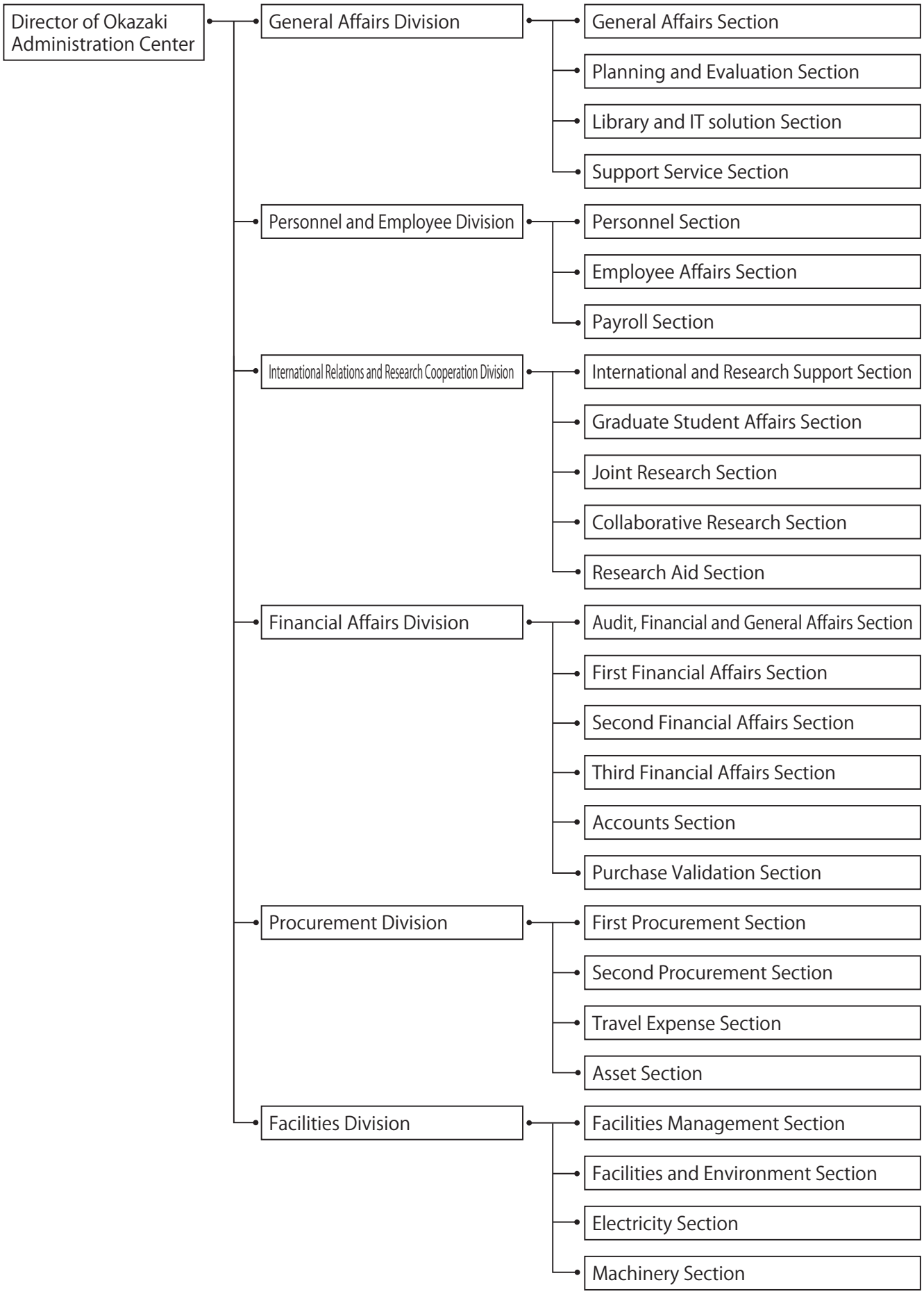
Use candidate: The officers, researchers, visiting researchers, graduate students, temporary staff accepted through an agreement between the organization and the staffing agency employed at Three Okazaki Institutes (including ExCELLS)

Opening day: From Monday to Friday

Opening time: From 8:00 to 19:00 (maximum extension 20:00)

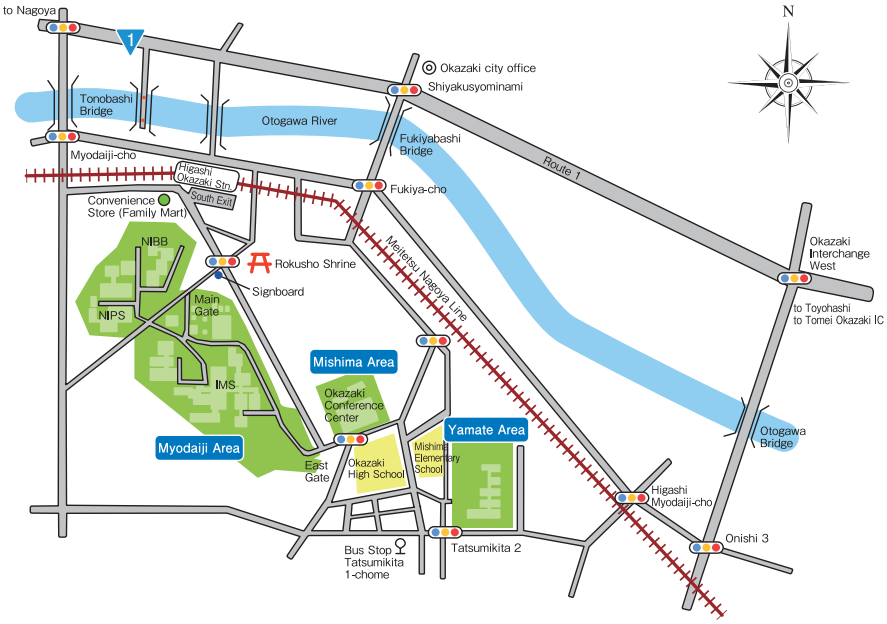
Childcare form: Regular childcare, temporary childcare

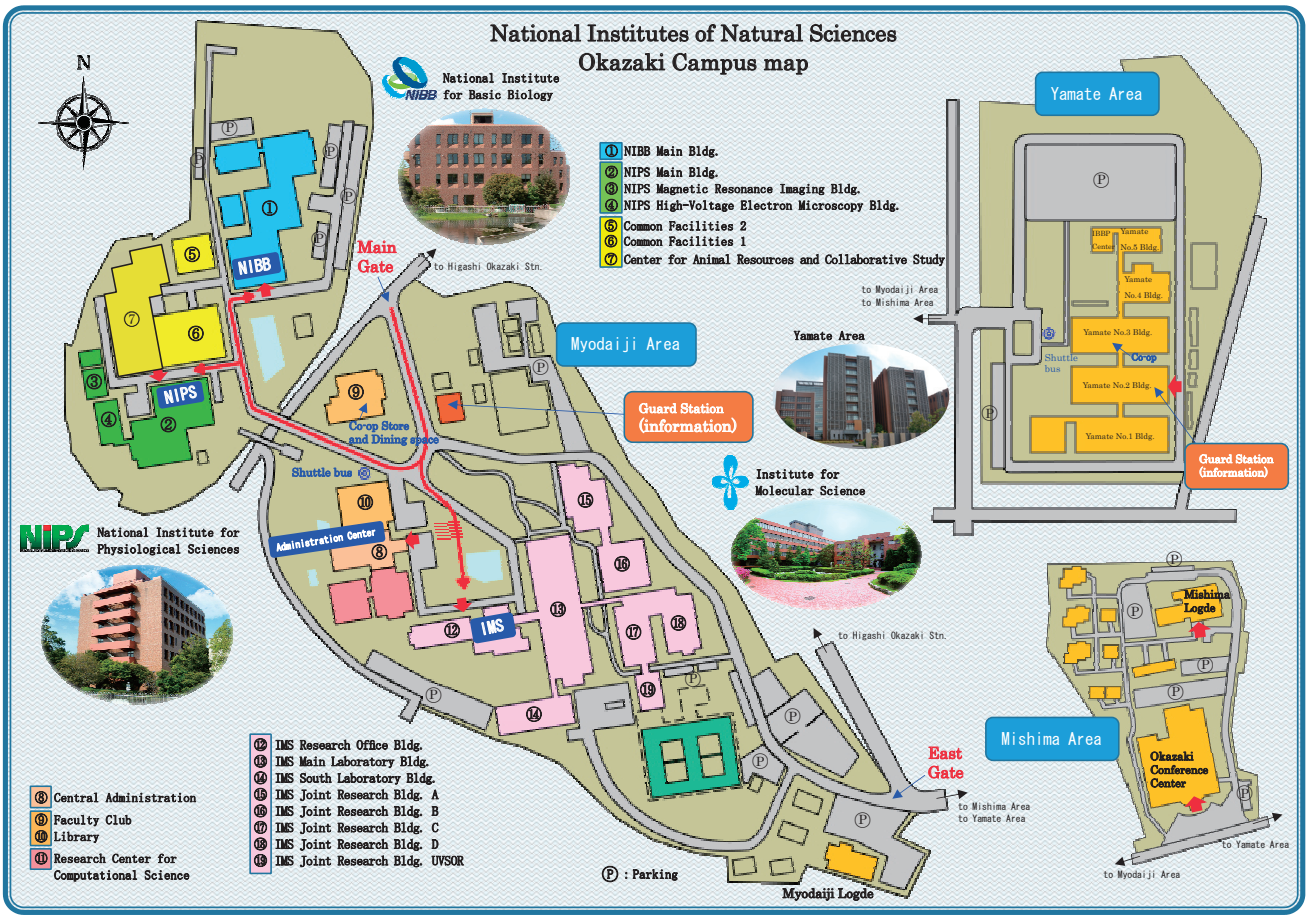
Okazaki Administration Center



Campus Map

According to area	Use classification
Myodaiji Area	National Institute for Physiological Sciences / National Institute for Basic Biology / Institute for Molecular Science / Okazaki Administration Office / Staff hall / Lodging for staff / Myodaiji Lodge
Mishima Area	Okazaki Conference Center / Mishima Lodge
Tatsumi Area	Lodging for staff
Yamate Area	Exploratory Research Center on Life and Living Systems, and others





Location

From Chubu Centrair International Airport

By train

Take the Meitetsu train, transfer at Jingumae station for Toyohashi-bound train and get off at Higashi Okazaki station (approximately 60 min). NIPS is a 7-minute walk up the hill on the south side of the station.

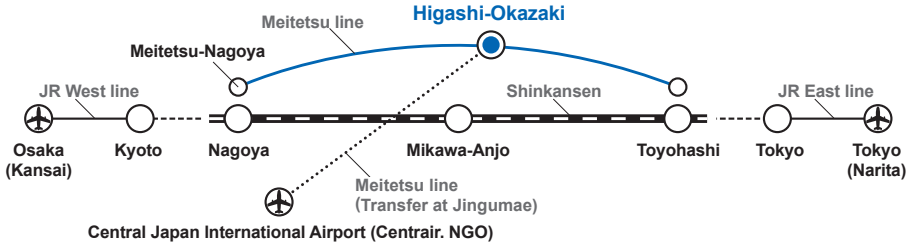
From Narita International Airport

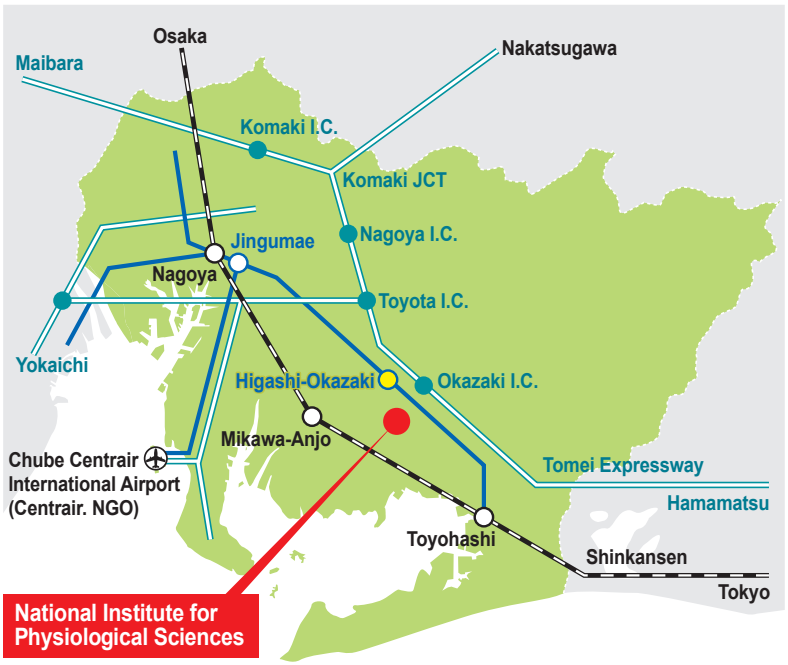
A) By plane (*Recommended)

Transfer to Chubu Centrair Japan International Airport

B) By train

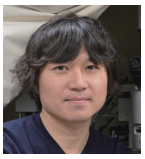
Take the JR Narita Express airport shuttle train from Narita to Tokyo Station (approximately 60 minutes) and change trains to the Tokaido shinkansen (bullet train).
At Toyohashi JR Station (approximately 80 minutes from Tokyo), change trains to the Meitetsu Line's Limited Express train bound for Gifu. Get off at Higashi Okazaki Station (approximately 20 minutes from Toyohashi). Turn left (south) at the ticket gate and exit the station. NIPS is a 7-minute walk up the hill.





Staff Index

A



AGETSUMA, Masakazu
19
Associate Professor
*Div. of Biophotonics

B

BURTON-SMITH, Raymond
11
Project Assistant Professor
*Div. of Structural Biology

C

CHIKEN, Satomi
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F

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34 49
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*Sec. of Brain Function Information
*Core for Spin Life Sciences, Okazaki Collaborative Platform

FURUSE, Mikio
13 33
Professor
*Div. of Cell Structure
*Sec. of Electron Microscopy

G

GO, Yasuhiro
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Professor
*Div. of Behavioral Development

GODA, Naokazu
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*Sec. of Brain Function Information
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HASEBE, Rie
15
Project Associate Professor
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44
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I

INUI, Koji
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Adjunct Professor
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ISA, Tadashi
49
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Professor
*Div. of Behavioral Development
*Sec. of NBR Project
*Supportive Center for Brain Research
*Research Enhancement Strategy Office

IZUMI, Yasushi
13
Associate Professor
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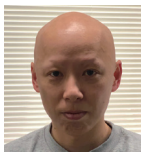
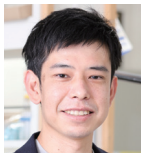
K



KANEKO, Takaaki
21
Assistant Professor
*Div. of Behavioral Development

KITAJO, Keiichi
22 44
Professor
*Div. of Neural Dynamics
*Research Enhancement Strategy Office

KOBAYASHI, Kenta
37
Associate Professor
*Sec. of Viral Vector Development



KOBAYASHI, Toshihiro
16 38
Professor
*Div. of Mammalian Embryogenesis
*Sec. of Mammalian Transgenesis

KOIKE, Takahiko
34
Associate Professor
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Professor
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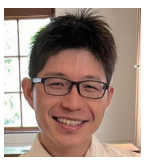
*Center for Research Collaboration
*Sec. of Collaboration Promotion
*Research Enhancement Strategy Office

L



LEE, Ming Liang
19
Project Assistant Professor
*Div. of Biophotonics

LUO, Junxiang
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MOORHOUSE, Andrew
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Visiting Professor
*Sec. of International Collaborative Research Project

MURAKAMI, Masaaki
15
Professor
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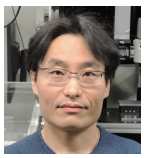

MURAKOSHI, Hideji
32
Associate Professor
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MURATA, Kazuyoshi
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Project Professor
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*Research Enhancement Strategy Office
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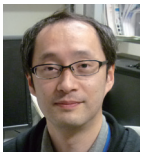

NISHIMURA, Akiyuki
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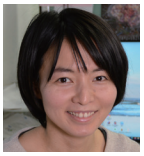
Project Associate Professor
*Div. of Cardiocirculatory Signaling



NISHIO, Akiko
26 44
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OHASHI, Masato
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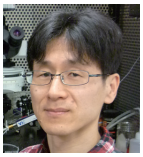

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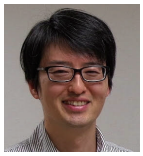

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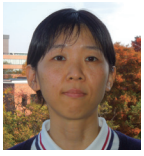

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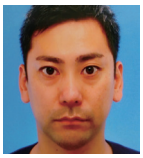

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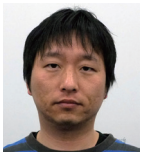

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