The 4th Japan - India Medical Products Regulation Symposium

More mature discussion about medical products regulation between Japan and India for further development of international cooperation schemes

The 4th Japan-India Joint Symposium on Medical Products was held on 5 February 2020 at BELLESALLE Tokyo Nihonbashi (Chuo-ku, Tokyo). Under the Memorandum of Cooperation on Medical Products Regulation Dialogue and Cooperation Framework concluded between Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) and the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2015, the two countries held their inaugural public-private sector joint symposium in 2016. The

Scene from the venue

Five Indian government officials participated in the symposium, including Dr. V.G. Somani, Drugs Controller General of India, CDSCO, Dr. Hemant G. Koshia, commissioner of Food & Drugs Control Administration Government of Gujarat, and Ms. Mona K C Khandhar, Minister (Econimic & Commerce) from Embassy of India in Japan. The Japanese government was represented by five officials from MHLW, including Mr. Hideki Tarumi, Director General of the Pharmaceutical Safety and Environmental Health Bureau, and Mr. Naoyuki Yasuda, Director of the Office of International Regulatory Affairs. Eleven people from the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA) also attended, including Dr. Yasuhiro Fujiwara, Chief Executive, Dr. Yoshikazu Hayashi, Senior Executive Director, Dr. Junko Sato, Office Director, Office of International Programs, Ms. Mari Shirotani, Director, Division of Regulatory Cooperation Office, and Ms. Mika Togashi, Chief Specialist. A total of 140 people attended the symposium from the industry sector. They included Sh. Udaya Bhaskar, Director-General of India's Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council (Pharmexcil), 29 people from JPMA, including Director-General, Mr. Tadaharu Goto, Chair of the International Affairs Committee, Mr. Masatomi Akana, and other executive members of the International Affairs Committee, nine delegates from local companies, 24 people from the Japan Federation of Medical Devices Association (JFMDA), including Executive Director, Mr. Nobuyoshi Ishii, six people from the Forum for Innovative Regenerative Medicine (FIRM) including Deputy Chairman, Mr. Kunihiko Suzuki, three people from the Japan Generic Medicines Association, including Vice Chairman, Mr. Hayakawa Masakane, and 47 members of the general public.

The agenda consisted of Opening Remarks and Keynote Speeches from the Japanese and Indian regulatory authority and industry representatives in the morning, followed by Part A (requirements of pre- and post-marketing clinical trials of innovative drugs). Presentations and lively discussions took place regarding the latest developments in clinical trial rules in both Japan and India, an issue that has been attracting much attention of late. The symposium continued in the afternoon with Part B (regulation of medical devices), Part C (regulation of and latest developments in generic drugs), and Part D (regulation of and latest developments in regenerative medicine products). This article focuses primarily on Part A and the pharmaceuticals-related presentations.

VIP participants at the Symposium

Opening Remarks

Director General, Pharmaceutical Safety and Environmental Health Bureau, MHLW

Mr. Hideki Tarumi

In 2015, Japan and India concluded a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of pharmaceutical regulations. Since 2016, both countries have held symposiums to deepen discussions on mutual understanding and measures for improvement. Going forward, we will continue discussions to promote regulatory harmonization in our two countries. Regarding the themes of the symposium, in particular, new drugs, as clinical development becomes increasingly globalized, it is important that we be able to deliver innovative new drugs to patients around the world faster and more safely through efficient development methods. We look forward to the early implementation of exemptions from additional clinical trials in India for drugs approved in Japan and to the promotion of international regulatory harmonization discussions between Japan and India, such as the International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) and the Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention and Pharmaceutical Inspection Co-operation Scheme (PIC/S).

Minister (Economic & Commerce) of Embassy of India Ms. Mona K C Khandhar

Since the conclusion of the Memorandum on Cooperation in the area of pharmaceutical regulations in 2015, exchanging opinions between the two countries through this symposium has allowed us to make significant progress in the pharmaceuticals and medical devices sectors. India has learned a great deal from Japan. We hope that today's symposium will also be a great success, so that better drugs can be delivered to patients.

Director General, JPMA Mr. Tadaharu Goto

Our two countries have been discussing regulatory harmonization since the conclusion of the Memorandum on Cooperation in 2015 and I understand outcomes arising from those discussions are gradually starting to appear. Recent years have seen an increase in international joint trials. In particular, there are expectations that Asian trials will become more active in the fields of cancer, respiratory diseases, and dementia. In order to deliver innovative pharmaceuticals to patients in Asia, close cooperation with India and other Asian countries will be critical. JPMA considers international joint clinical trials to be one form of best practice for delivering innovative drugs to patients quickly, and we will promote the implementation of such initiatives. I hope that a lively exchange of opinions will take place at this symposium and that it will lead to the development of a good relationship between Japan and India.

Otsuka Pharmaceutical India Pvt.Ltd Mr. Mihir Raja

We believe that there are three important factors to ensure that cooperative arrangements between our two countries head toward wonderful goals. They are cooperation among stakeholders, continuous sharing of best practice, and commitment by the authorities. Dr. Somani is also advancing commitment and conducting various initiatives including exemption of clinical trials in India and issuing policies on new trials. The industry considers this trend as a very favorable one and will give further support so that cooperation of the two countries can proceed to the next step.

- Keynote Speeches

Latest trend of pharmaceutical, medical device regulation, and international cooperation of India

Drugs Controller General, CDSCO Dr. V.G. Somani

I would like to express my gratitude that this Japan-India Symposium is held every year, allowing us to deepen our mutual understanding. In its promotion of international cooperation and rationalization of regulations, CDSCO is primarily conscious of three things: (1) providing high-quality and affordable pharmaceuticals and medical devices in India, (2) improving the business environment through the development of regulations, and (3) promoting activities that benefit patients and consumers in line with their wishes (physicians, manufacturers, industry associations, and regulators are marginal presences, and the focus must be on patients). Under the New Drug and Clinical Trial Rules, which were revised in 2019, products are selected for immediate review based on the severity, rarity, and prevalence of the subject disease, and applicants can also take advantage of pre-application consultations and other measures. Currently, India is actively implementing reforms in cooperation with other countries and has signed a Basic Agreement (MOU) with Japan. In terms of ways in which we can cooperate, the various initiatives we are exploring include the reciprocal use of review and approval processes, sharing of GxP (suitability and criteria), the promotion of understanding of India’s pharmacopoeia, and capacity building (strengthening of inspections and safety monitoring). We hope, in particular, to promote the development of the environments for reviews, PV, and clinical trials through cooperation with Japan.

Latest trend of pharmaceutical and medical device regulation, and international cooperation of Japan

Senior Executive Director, PMDA Dr. Yoshikazu Hayashi

In the pursuit of our operations, the PMDA places top priority on the "Four F's."

- Patient First: In May 2019, the Patient Participation Study Working Group (WG) was established with the aim of identifying what patients want and incorporating their wishes into our operations.
- Access First: We are working on international collaboration and cooperation to optimize patient access through a balance between maximizing efficacy and minimizing risk.
- Safety First: Quality controls need to be implemented thoroughly to ensure safety. PIC/S promotes quality control through the harmonization of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) regulations and inspections, and we hope to share Japan's experiences of joining PIC/S with India.
- Asia First: Not only are Asian countries geographically close to each other, but they have a high degree of similarity in many other factors as well. We hope, therefore, that the Asian region will work together to build strong cooperative relationships. We will promote regulatory harmonization and international joint clinical trials in Asia through the Asian Network Meeting. We expect that this will encourage the provision of new drugs to patients around the world beyond Asia.

Part A. Clinical Study Requirements on Innovative Products in Pre and Post Marketing Phase

Clinical trials and regulatory supports for innovative drug development in Japan

Review Specialist, Office of New Drug I, PMDA Mr. Daisuke Sato

I will present information about the status of drug development in Japan and the relevant regulations.

- In reviews of pharmaceuticals for rare diseases, there are cases in which clinical data packages of clinical trials conducted in Japan and overseas have been compiled and ethnical differences were considered based on ICH E5 Guidelines. With the introduction of ICH E17, going forward, we hope to see a further increase in the number of cases of international joint clinical trials.
- In Japan, through clinical trial consultations, companiess and the PMDA can closely work together to develop drugs efficiently. The PMDA's views are determined based on notifications, but flexible responses can be provided in accordance with actual circumstances and companies' needs. The early provision of development plans through clinical trial consultations will lead to smoother reviews once the application for approval has been submitted. This will benefit the PMDA as well.

The New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019

Drugs Controller General , CDSCO Dr. V.G. Somani

I will talk about India's pharmaceutical development regulations (The New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules) in India, focusing mainly on recent legislative amendments.

- With the recent amendments to the law, the definition of new drugs has been changed, and the law now clearly states that monoclonal antibodies and gene therapy products will also be treated as new drugs.
- Compensation in trials led by physicians or sponsors has been made clearer. In India, quite often, there is a tendency for the more socially vulnerable to take part in trials. We believe that, as a government, we need to protect such people.
- India has a scheme in which approval can be given without clinical trial data in India, on the condition that post-market clinical trials (Ph4) are conducted. On the condition that there are no problems with the PK/PD data and safety, approval is given after confirming the marketing authorization holder's signed commitment to conduct Ph4 trials. Drugs approved in countries designated by India, such as the United States and Japan, are eligible for this scheme.

  In addition, the requirements for Ph4 may be eased for drugs for severe diseases and diseases with high unmet-medical needs in India.
- A pre-/post-submission meeting program was established to increase the transparency and predictability of new drug reviews. Under this paid program, companies can receive advice about their development plans, such as the design of clinical and preclinical trials, before they submit an application.

Strategies and challenges for innovative drug development

Chairperson, Drug Evaluation Committee, JPMA Dr. Satoshi Kunitada,

I will talk about the current status and future prospects of drug development.

- The vision of the Drug Evaluation Committee is to "deliver innovative drugs to patients faster and more efficiently through support for technological innovation, the establishment of laws and regulations to support that innovation, and further, through regulatory science."
- In recent years, various challenges have arisen in drug development. They include changes in the target disease, a shift-change toward biopharmaceuticals, and the use of various types of clinical trials. To make drug development faster and more efficient under such circumstances, international joint clinical trials are vital.
- With the development of the E6, E8, E17, and E19 guidelines, efficiency reforms are proceeding for clinical trials. It is possible to conduct more flexible clinical trials based on the concept of Adjustment Protocols (E20), as one of these reforms.
- Regarding the use of Real World Data, overseas, pioneering experiments are being conducted, including an example where data on off-label use are being compiled to lead to approval of additional indications. In Japan as well, we believe that efficacy and safety should be evaluated based on off-label use data stored in the medical information database network (MID-NET), and the potential for the expansion of indications for diseases for which clinical trials would be difficult to conduct. We have also recommended that MID-NET be put to use in new drug development such as the development of applications for children and for rare diseases.

From left: Dr. V.G. Somani, Drug Controller General, CDSCO; Mr. Daisuke Sato, Review Specialist, Office of Newdrug I, PMDA; Mr. Satoshi Kunitada, Chairperson, Drug Evaluation Committee, JPMA

Closing Remarks

Senior Executive Director, PMDA Dr. Yoshikazu Hayashi

In the pharmaceuticals sector, we were able to exchange information on the latest regulatory systems in both countries, and we learned that clinical trial consultations are also being enhanced in India. Based on today's discussions, I hope that our two countries will further develop their cooperative relationship and develop it into an international cooperation scheme.

Drugs Controller General, CDSCO Dr. V.G. Somani

My impression at today’s symposium is that there has been a maturing in the level of our discussions. India is proceeding with its participation in international platforms, including participating in four WHO working groups as an observer, as part of its pre-application requirements for PIC/S membership. We are also striving toward regulatory harmonization, including holding multilateral meetings that include Japan and bilateral meetings. Regarding our relationship with Japan, going forward, we hope to advance to the next stage that goes beyond maturity, in which we will not only achieve mutual understanding but also bring a variety of initiatives to fruition.

Postscript

With the conclusion of the program, a reception was held on the same floor in a relaxed atmosphere. The reception provided a demonstration of the amicable collaboration between the government and industry in Japan, with Dr. Junko Sato, Director General of the PMDA's Office of International Programs, and Mr. Masatomi Akana, Chair of the JPMA's International Affairs Committee, acting as joint MCs. The toast was given by Mr. Hideki Tarumi, Director General of the Pharmaceutical Safety and Environmental Health Bureau, MHLW, and the formal closing mid-way through the reception was delivered by Dr. Yasuhiro Fujiwara, Chief Executive of the PMDA. In between, Dr. V.G. Somani, CDSCO Drug Controller General, and Dr. Hemant G. Koshia, the regulation authority in Gujarat also gave speeches. This was Dr. Somani's sixth trip to the podium that day, including in the various sessions of the symposium. Even so, his passion and expectations toward the symposium remained unwavering, and he made the following statements. "This symposium started just as an exchange of information, but recently, the discussions have matured greatly, and our mutual understanding has deepened. The friendship between the Indian authorities and the PMDA is deep, and we welcome bilateral initiatives."

Dr. Yasuhiro Fujiwara, PMDA's Chief Executive

Commissioner, Food and Drug Control Administration, Gujarat Dr. Hemant G. Koshia

A meeting was held between the both authorities the following day. It is understood that various outcomes arose from this meeting, including concrete planning for pre-application consultations and clinical trial exemptions, greater efficiency in review processes, and further progress in international cooperation for joining ICH and PIC/S. At this year's symposium, there were many last-minute cancellations and resulting agenda changes due to the need to deal with the novel coronavirus, which has become a challenge of the utmost urgency in international health. We are grateful that so many representatives of the authorities, industries, and related organizations in both India and Japan and from the Indian Embassy in Japan were able to gather together under one roof to hold the symposium at BELLESALLE Tokyo Nihonbashi. The next symposium is scheduled to be held in India in 2021.

Joint MCs at the reception, Mr. Masatomi Akana, Chair of the JPMA's International Affairs Committee, and Dr. Junko Sato, Office Director of the PMDA's Office of International Programs

(Chika Kuwahara, India Team Leader, Asia Sub-committee, International Affairs Committee)