I. THE PHARMACEUTICALS AND MEDICAL DEVICES AGENCY

1. HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE AGENCY

- The critical lessons the Japanese learned from the two disastrous incidents caused by adverse drug reaction, thalidomide and SMON (sub-acute myelo-optical-neuropathy), resulted in the establishment of the Fund for Adverse Drug Reactions Suffering Relief in October 1979 in accordance with the stipulations of the Adverse Drug Reaction Suffering Relief Fund Law (1979, Law No. 55). The Fund aimed to promptly relief patients suffering from adverse drug reactions. In 1987, the Fund started R&D operations under the name of the Fund for Adverse Drug Reaction Relief and R&D Promotion and reorganized into the Organization for Pharmaceutical Safety and Research (OPSR/Kiko) in 1994 for equivalency review of generic drugs. Later, in 1997, the organization started to provide advice on clinical trials and conformity audit on application for drugs and medical devices approval.

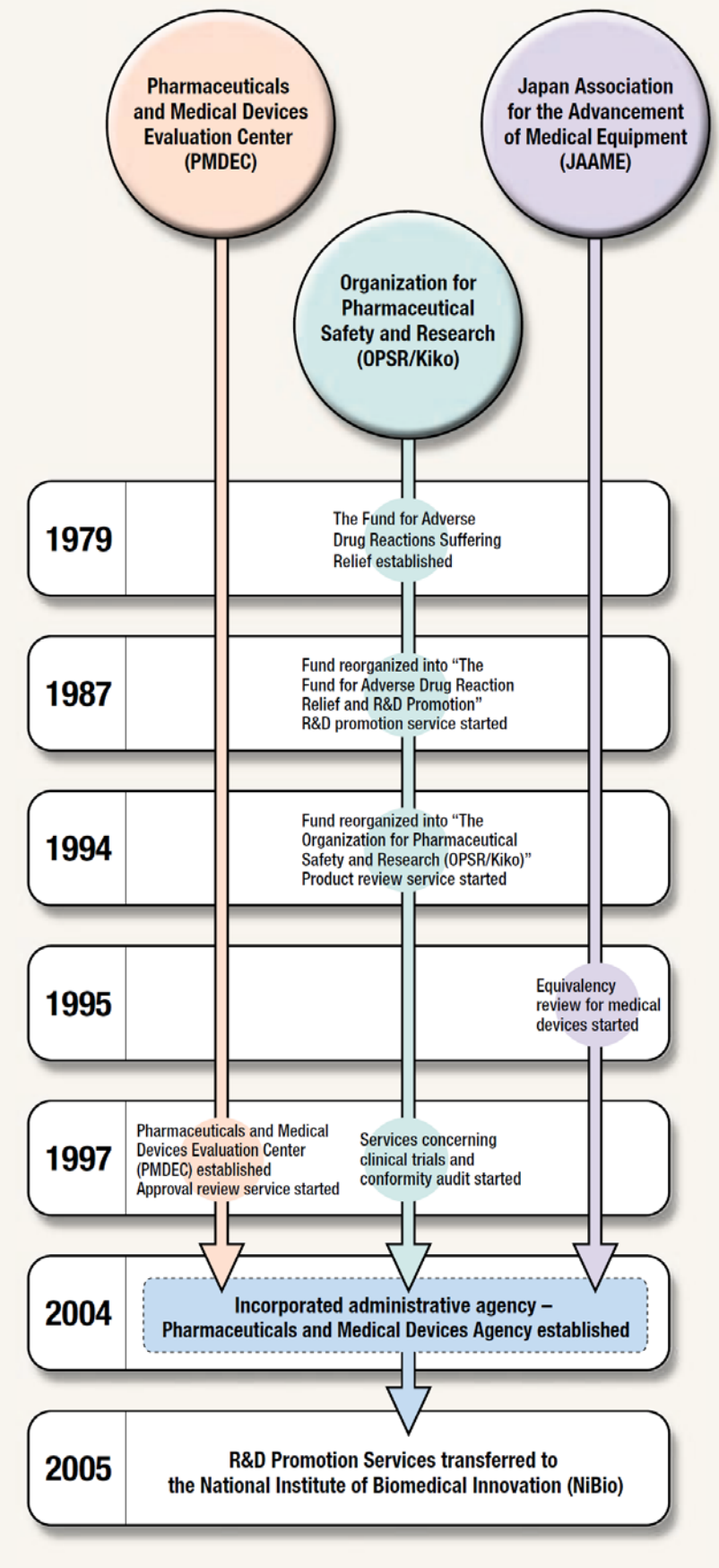
- In 1997, the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Evaluation Center (PMDEC), was established at the National Institute of Health Sciences in order to develop a systematic approval review system and to improve the quality and level of review. At the Center, teams consisting of experts specialized in pharmaceutical science, medical science, biostatistics etc. engaged in reviews. In addition, since 1995 the Japan Association for the Advancement of Medical Equipment (JAAME) began its operation to conduct equivalency reviews for medical devices as a designated investigatory agency under the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law (PAL).

- From 1997 to 1999, the number of the staff, who engaged in the review and safety operations, was systematically increased in a large scale at the former Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) and the three organizations above (from 121 staff members in 1996 to 241 in 1999). However, the reform to further increase the staff and strengthen the structure of those governmental organizations faced a limit.

  In the midst of this reform, the Organization for Pharmaceutical Safety and Research (OPSR/Kiko) was abolished based on the Cabinet decision on “Special Service Agency Restructuring Plan” made in December 2001, and the new Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA) was founded consolidating the operations distributed to the PMDEC and the Japan Association for the JAAME in order to further enhance the review and safety measures. In 2002, the draft of the Law for the Incorporated Administrative Agency - Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency was discussed and passed at the 155th special session of the Diet, resulting in the establishment of the Agency (PMDA) on April 1, 2004 in accordance with the Law for the Incorporated Administrative Agency - Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (2002 Law No.192).

- The objective of the Agency is to contribute to improvement of public health through three main operations such as : providing prompt relief services for the sufferers of biological product-derived infectious diseases as well as adverse drug reactions (ADRs) (Adverse Health Effect Relief Services); providing consistent advice and reviewing to ensure quality, efficacy and safety of drugs and medical devices from non-clinical trial stage to approval (Review Operations); collecting, analyzing and providing information on post-marketing safety (Post-marketing Safety Operations).

  Previously, the Agency included the service (R&D Promotion Services) to promote the basic research and development of pharmaceuticals and medical devices that contribute maintaining and advancing public health. However, the regulatory and the promotion operations/services were separated, and the R&D Promotion Services were transferred to the National Institute of Biomedical Innovation (NiBio) in April, 2005 in order to allow the Agency to focus specifically on review, safety and relief operations.


Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Evaluation Center (PMDEC)
Japan Association for the Advancement of Medical Equipment (JAAME)
Organization for Pharmaceutical Safety and Research (OPSR/Kiko)
1979
The Fund for Adverse Drug Reactions Suffering Relief established
1987
Fund reorganized into "The Fund for Adverse Drug Reaction Relief and R&D Promotion"
R&D promotion service started
1994
Fund reorganized into "The Organization for Pharmaceutical Safety and Research (OPSR/Kiko)"
Product review service started
1995
Equivalency review for medical devices started
1997
Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Evaluation Center (PMDEC) established
Approval review service started
Services concerning clinical trials and conformity audit started
2004
Incorporated administrative agency – Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency established
2005
R&D Promotion Services transferred to the National Institute of Biomedical Innovation (NiBio)

2. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

(1) Adverse Health Effect Relief Services

- The Agency takes over some services from OPSR/Kiko, such as payments for medical fees, disability pensions, and bereaved family pensions to the sufferers from diseases or disabilities caused by adverse drug reaction. (Adverse Drug Reaction Relief Service)

- In April 2004, the Agency also started to provide benefits to the sufferers whose health was damaged due to infections from drug and medical devices containing the ingredients and materials derived from biological entities. (Biological Product-derived Infectious Disease Relief Service)

- The Agency is commissioned by the government and pharmaceutical companies to provide healthcare allowances and nursing expenses to the SMON patients (Service for Relief of SMON Patients). In addition, the Agency works under the commission of the Yu-ai Welfare Foundation to make payments of healthcare allowance to the HIV-positive and AIDS patients (Service for Relief of HIV-positive and AIDS Patients).

(2) Review and Related Operations

- In accordance with the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law (PAL), the Agency evaluates the efficacy, safety, and quality of pharmaceuticals and medical devices applied for approval review based on the current scientific and technological standards. In addition, the Agency re-examines and re-evaluates approved drugs and medical devices and reviews confirmation applications on genetically modified organisms that are stipulated in the Law on the “Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity through Regulations on the Use of Living Modified Organisms” (Law No. 97 of 2003) (Approval Review Operation).

- In response to the requests from applicants who conduct clinical trials, the Agency provides face-to-face consultations and advice on clinical trials for new drugs and medical devices as well as clinical studies for re-evaluation and re-examination of approved products (Face-to-face Advice/Consultation Service).

- The Office of Conformity Audit conducts on-site and document reviews/audits to see if application dossiers which were submitted for approval review, and re-evaluation or re-examination were appropriately prepared in accordance with GLP (Good Laboratory Practices), GCP (Good Clinical Practices), and the reliability criteria (Conformity Audit Operation).

- In addition, the Office of Compliance and Standards conducts on-site and document reviews of manufacturers of new drug and new medical devices etc. in order to see if their manufacturing facilities and control systems comply with the relevant ministry ordinances and are capable of guaranteeing the quality of their products (GMP/QMS Review Operations).

(3) Post-marketing Safety Operations

- The Agency's safety department intends to improve the safety of marketed drugs and medical devices and to ensure patients and healthcare professionals to access them safely and properly. For this purpose, the department functions in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) on the following points;

1. To collect and organize information on safety of drugs and medical devices from a broad range of sources, such as reports and information on ADRs, medical device malfunction and infectious diseases from companies, medical institutions, foreign regulatory authorities, and academic societies (Information Collection and Compilation Operation).

2. To investigate and examine with regard to post-marketing safety measures based on the collected information in 1 above (Investigation and Examination Operation).

3. To provide consultations and advice in response to the inquiries from manufacturers or consumers (Consultation Service).

4. To provide information on the safety of drugs and medical devices widely to healthcare professionals, patients, and companies in a timely manner. (Safety Information Service)

5. To conduct examination for developing the standards, such as the Japanese Pharmacopoeia stipulated in the PAL (Examination Operation for Standards Development).

Structure of the Agency, FY 2005