ICH Releases Q7 Q&A on GMP for API

The International Conference on Harmonisation (ICH) has published the ICH Q7 Questions & Answers on the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Guide for Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API). PIC/S contributed to this Q&A document, which provides interpretation to GMP for APIs since the implementation of the ICH Q7 Guideline. The ICH Q7 Guideline was originally based on a PIC/S draft guideline on API and adopted by PIC/S in 2001 and then integrated as part two of the PIC/S GMP Guide in 2007.

Update from ICH Steering Committee, Fukuoka, Japan, June 2015

The ICH Steering Committee (SC) and its Expert Working Groups met in Fukuoka, Japan, from 5–10 June 2015. The SC agreed on the key issues relating to the reform of ICH in terms of the Articles of Association, funding model, and membership. An important part of the reform effort is establishing a formal organization with a new approach to membership, governance, and shared funding among ICH members. The new ICH association, under Swiss law, is expected to be established over the coming months with the aim of being operational by 2016.

Twelve working groups met in Fukuoka and achieved important progress with regard to their respective objectives. The Q&A document on the Q7 Guideline on Good Manufacturing Practices for Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) was signed off at Step 4 in Fukuoka and is thus ready for implementation in the ICH regions. In addition, two documents – the draft addendum to M7 Guideline on Assessment and Control of DNA Reactive (Mutagenic) Impurities in Pharmaceuticals to Limit Potential Carcinogenic Risk and the draft addendum to E6 on Good Clinical Practice – have reached Step 2b and will be submitted for public consultation.

Africa

Tanzania

TFDA Adopts the EAC Harmonized Guidelines on Evaluation and Registration of Medicines

Tanzania Food and Drugs Authority (TFDA) has adopted the East African Community (EAC) harmonized guidelines on Medicines Evaluation and Registration (MER). These guidelines contain the common technical document as well as the common criteria to be used for the evaluation and registration of medicinal product dossiers in the region.

This adoption follows Decision EAC/CM29/Decision 36 to approve the EAC harmonized guidelines on medicines evaluation and registration by the 29th Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers on 20 September 2014. The Council also agreed that 1 January 2015 is the effective date for the domestication and implementation of the harmonized guidelines at the EAC Partner States’ level.

Asia

China

CFDA Issues Three Appendixes to Good Manufacturing Practice for Medical Devices

In order to strengthen the supervision and management of medical devices, improve enterprises’ quality management level, and ensure the safety and effectiveness of medical devices, the CFDA recently formulated and issued Announcement on Promulgation of Good Manufacturing Practice for Medical Devices Appendix for Sterile Medical Devices, the Announcement on Promulgation of Good Manufacturing Practice for Medical Devices Appendix for Implantable Medical Devices, and the Announcement on Promulgation of Good Manufacturing Practice for Medical Devices Appendix for In Vitro Diagnosis Reagents in accordance with the Regulations for the Supervision and Administration of Medical Devices and the Administrative Measures for the Supervision of Medical Device Manufacturing.

The three appendixes, which include special requirements for the Good Manufacturing Practice of sterile medical devices, implantable medical devices, and in vitro diagnosis reagents, will come into effect as of 1 October 2015.

CFDA Issues Measures for Unannounced Inspection of Drugs and Medical Devices

The CFDA recently issued the Measures for Unannounced Inspection of Drugs and Medical Devices, which will be implemented as of 1 September 2015. The measures comprise 35 articles in five chapters, including general provisions, initiating, inspection, handling, and supplementary provisions.

CFDA Issues Good Supply Practice for Pharmaceutical Products

The Good Supply Practice for Pharmaceutical Products (CFDA Order No. 13) was adopted at the executive meeting of the
CFDA on 18 May 2015 and was recently promulgated. It went into effect as of the date of promulgation.

**The 2015 Edition of Chinese Pharmacopoeia to Enhance the Overall Level of China’s Drug Quality**

The 2015 edition of Chinese Pharmacopoeia was recently adopted at the plenary session of the Executive Committee of the Tenth Chinese Pharmacopoeia Commission. On 5 June 2015, the CFDA promulgated the 2015 edition of Chinese Pharmacopoeia, which will go into effect on 1 December 2015. The promulgation of the new edition of Chinese Pharmacopoeia marks the promotion of the level of China’s drug use, production, and supervision. It will drive the overall improvement of drug quality and play a significant role in ensuring drug safety and effectiveness.

**India**

*India Moves Towards Regulating Medical Devices*

In an effort to boost international confidence in medical devices manufactured by Indian firms, the Indian government is creating the National Medical Device Authority under the Department of Pharmaceuticals to begin the process of regulating medical devices.

**Japan**

*PMDA International Strategic Plan 2015*

The Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA) has shortened the review period for medical products to the world’s top standard through its first and second Mid-term Plan Periods (Fiscal Year 2004 to 2013). In order to respond to domestic and global expectations, the PMDA has developed and announced its strategic plan entitled “PMDA International Strategic Plan 2015.” Below are the key international actions set forth in the “PMDA International Strategic Plan 2015.”

1. Establish the “Regulatory Science Center” for conducting first-in-the-world product reviews, implementing safety measures, and undertaking other activities, as well as publishing the outcomes.
2. Launch the “Asian Training Center for Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Regulatory Affairs” to share the PMDA’s accumulated knowledge and experience in product reviews, implementation of safety measures, and provision of relief services with Asian and overseas regulatory authorities.
3. Cooperate with overseas regulatory authorities for the expansion of harmonization activities (such as the ICH and the International Medical Device Regulators Forum) and work-sharing (such as GMP/QMS inspections).
Malaysia

Malaysia Issues Guideline on Good Pharmaceutical Trade Practice 11

Good Pharmaceutical Trade Practice for Private Sector is intended to ensure best trade practices across pharmaceutical distribution chains. All pharmaceutical trade practices should be in line with existing laws and regulations, and this guideline will address the finer details not spelled out under current legislation.

EUROPE

European Union

EMA Publication of Safety Reports for Nationally Authorized Medicines Will Support Timely and Harmonized Implementation of Safety Measures in EU Member States 12

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has started to publish the outcomes of single assessments of periodic safety update reports (PSURs) for active substances contained only in nationally authorized medicines. This initiative aims to support the harmonized implementation of safety measures for medicines with the same active substance across European Union (EU) Member States. All pharmaceutical companies holding marketing authorizations for medicines at the national level are advised to regularly monitor the published information to check for outcomes relevant to their products.

Launch of Two-Month Public Consultations on Revised Guidelines on Accelerated Assessment and Conditional Marketing Authorization 13

The EMA has revised its guidelines on the implementation of accelerated assessment and conditional marketing authorization, two key tools in the European legislation to accelerate patients’ access to medicines that address unmet medical needs. The public consultations on the revised guidelines are open until 30 September 2015.

EMA Releases “Quick Response (QR) Codes in the Labelling and Package Leaflet of Centrally Authorized Medicinal Products” 14

With the availability of new communication technologies, it has become apparent that patients/users of medicinal products may benefit from information provided in electronic format. In this context, there has been an increased demand by applicants to the centralized procedure to include quick response (QR) codes in the labeling and/or package leaflet of medicinal products as an additional way of providing information to patients and health-care professionals. This document outlines the requirements for use of QR codes in this context.

EMA to Encourage Use of Scientific Advice for Post-Authorization Safety Studies 15

The EMA is launching a 12-month pilot to encourage companies to seek scientific advice for post-authorization safety studies for medicines. This voluntary, optional procedure will help to improve the design of studies meant to collect further information on a medicine’s safety once it is on the market. This pilot will build on the expertise of the Agency’s Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC).

EMA Launches Two-Month Public Consultations on Revised Guidelines on Accelerated Assessment and Conditional Marketing Authorization 16

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FDA, European Commission and EMA Reinforce Collaboration to Advance Medicine Development and Evaluation 17

Senior leaders from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the EC and the EMA, aiming to enhance trust in the quality, safety, and efficacy of medicines, reviewed their ongoing cooperative activities and discussed strategic priorities for the next two years at their regular bilateral meeting held on 19 June 2015. Over the years, the EMA and FDA have significantly increased their level of collaboration and sharing of information to advance regulatory excellence worldwide. There are now daily interactions, most of them structured around scientific and regulatory working groups, or “clusters.” The focus of the cluster reviews during this bilateral was pharmacovigilance, biosimilars, pediatrics, and veterinary medicines.

Looking ahead, the EMA, the EC and the FDA decided to establish a new cluster on patient engagement to share experience and best practices regarding the involvement of patients in the development, evaluation, and post-authorization activities related to medicines. Participants also agreed that communication on the ongoing successful cooperation should be enhanced and that efforts to support communication activities and align core messages should be strengthened. They also agreed to further strengthen their collaboration in inspections and data integrity, safety monitoring of medicines, biosimilars, pediatric medicines, rare diseases, and timely access to new medicines and veterinary medicines. This will help EU regulators and the FDA increase efficiency on a global level and avoid duplication.

Finland

Fimea Meets 2014 Performance Target 18

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health’s statement on the Finnish Medicines Agency’s (Fimea’s) final accounts reports that Fimea has engaged in efficient cooperation, been active, and carried out assignments to an extremely high standard. Fimea met its 2014 performance targets and scored 4+ on a scale of 1 to 5. The year 2014 was Fimea’s best to date.

National OTC Medicines Program Now Available in English and Swedish 19

Fimea has published English and Swedish translations of the national over-the-counter (OTC) medicines program on its web-
site. The program discusses self-medication in Finland from the perspective of the related objectives and requirements and assesses the factors affecting OTC medicine selection. It lays down related principles and focuses on the possibilities offered by medicinal products with a marketing authorization as a component of self-care.

**Switzerland**

*EU and Swiss regulators sign confidentiality arrangement* [20]

The EMA’s and the EC’s Directorate General for Health and Food Safety have agreed with the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products (Swissmedic) and the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA) to share non-public information on the safety, quality, and efficacy of medicines, already authorized or under review, both in Switzerland and the EU, in order to enhance public health protection.

The arrangement supports efforts by European and Swiss regulators to improve the oversight of medicines for human and animal health. The arrangement builds on the previous cooperation of the EMA and Swissmedic during the 2009/2010 H1N1 pandemic and on the Mutual Recognition Agreement signed in 2002. The arrangement came into effect on 10 July 2015; it is valid for five years and may be renewed.

**United Kingdom**

*MHRA Launches Inspectorate Blog* [21]

Keeping stakeholders informed of the latest changes in regulatory thinking, guidance, and requirements is crucial to the mission of the Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). It allows the MHRA to provide stakeholders with advice and support, promote innovation, and ultimately protect public health. To this end, the MHRA has started an Inspectorate Blog – a new and exciting way to communicate. Upcoming topics are expected to include (GxP), compliance management approaches, data integrity, preventing drug shortages, significant findings from inspections, supporting innovation
and work with the MHRA Innovation Office, and upcoming learning opportunities.

GMP Data Integrity: A New Look at an Old Topic

One of the top global issues reported in the pharmaceutical media over the past two years has been data integrity. Regulatory actions resulting from data integrity failures have led to the withdrawal of supply across multiple markets, product recall, and serious reputational damage for those companies concerned. However, this hot topic is not a new requirement, as basic data-integrity principles are already described in international good manufacturing practice guidance. The MHRA is taking a three-part look at this issue in its new Inspectorate Blog.

Review Finds MHRA Can Lead the Way for Global Regulatory Reforms

According to the findings of a Triennial Review of the agency, published 21 July 2015, the government agency that regulates medicines and medical devices to ensure their quality, safety, and efficacy can place the UK at the forefront of a global drive to improve public health. The MHRA is already a leading national regulator at both pan-European and global levels but can go further and deeper in leading the international community to implement reform.

NORTH AMERICA

Canada
Health Canada Publishes “Guidance on Medical Device Compliance and Enforcement (GUI-0073)”

This document outlines the strategy and provides guidance for the medical device industry on Health Canada’s compliance and enforcement activities. This version of the document includes updated Web links and the incorporation of changes to the establishment licensing provisions that occurred recently due to a cost-recovery initiative.

Regulations Amending the Food and Drug Regulations (Shortages and Discontinuation of Sale of Drugs)

Drug shortages and discontinuations are an immediate, pressing challenge to patient safety in Canada. Under the present voluntary reporting system, Canadians and those responsible for the provision of their health care are not being adequately informed of drug shortages and discontinuations and thus are not able to make well-informed, timely mitigation decisions. The Food and Drug Regulations currently have no provisions addressing drug shortages. They do contain a provision that requires companies with a market-approved drug that has been assigned a drug identification number (DIN) to notify Health Canada within 30 days of discontinuation of the sale of that drug. However, that provision does not specify the information to be provided as part of a notification.

In order to address these issues, the government of Canada is proposing a mandatory drug-shortage-and-discontinuation reporting system that would provide patients, practitioners, and other health-care stakeholders with reliable and trustworthy information in a timely fashion, as well as a more accurate picture of which drugs are actively being sold on the Canadian market.

United States
The Drug Supply Chain Security Act Implementation: Product Tracing Requirements for Dispensers – Compliance Policy; Guidance for Industry

The FDA announced the availability of a guidance for the industry entitled DSCSA Implementation: Product Tracing Requirements for Dispensers – Compliance Policy. This guidance announces the FDA’s intention with regard to the enforcement of certain product tracing requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) added by the Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA). The FDA does not intend to take action against dispensers who, prior to 1 November 2015, accepted ownership of products without receiving product tracing information, prior to or at the time of a transaction, or do not capture and maintain the product tracing information, as required by the FD&C Act.
FDA Issues Rule on Permanent Discontinuance or Interruption in Manufacturing of Certain Drug or Biological Products

The FDA is amending its regulations to implement certain drug-shortage provisions of the FD&C Act, as amended by the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act. The rule requires that all applicants of covered approved drugs or biological products – including certain applicants of blood or blood components for transfusion and all manufacturers of covered drugs marketed without an approved application – notify the FDA electronically of a permanent discontinuance or an interruption in manufacturing of the product that is likely to lead to a meaningful disruption in supply (or a significant disruption in supply of blood or blood components) of the product in the United States.

FDA Releases “Analytical Procedures and Methods Validation for Drugs and Biologics Guidance for Industry”

The guidance entitled Analytical Procedures and Methods Validation for Drugs and Biologics Guidance for Industry discusses how to submit analytical procedures and methods validation data to support the documentation of the identity, strength, quality, purity, and potency of drug substances and drug products. It supersedes the draft by the same name that was published on 19 February 2014 and replaces the 2000 draft guidance for the industry entitled Analytical Procedures and Methods Validation and the 1987 FDA guidance for industry entitled Submitting Samples and Analytical Data for Methods Validation.


Quality metrics are used throughout the pharmaceutical industry to monitor quality control systems and processes and drive continuous improvement efforts in drug manufacturing. These metrics can also be used by the FDA to help develop compliance and inspection policies and practices, such as risk-based inspection scheduling of drug manufacturers; to improve the FDA’s ability to predict and, therefore, possibly mitigate, future drug shortages; and to encourage the pharmaceutical industry to implement state-of-the-art, innovative quality management systems for pharmaceutical manufacturing. This guidance includes an explanation of how the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) and the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) intend to collect
data and use quality metrics to help ensure that their policies and practices continue to support continuous improvement and innovation in the pharmaceutical manufacturing industry.

The FDA understands that establishments involved in the manufacture, preparation, propagation, or processing of human drugs, including oversight to ensure quality, currently use quality metrics as part of the process validation life cycle and pharmaceutical quality system (PQS) assessment. This guidance outlines the FDA's authority to require owners and operators of such establishments to provide, upon request, records and information that the FDA may inspect and describes an initial set of requests it intends to make to certain owners and operators. The FDA intends to make its requests at the time this guidance is finalized and provide notice in the Federal Register. In order to receive public comment on these requests, this draft guidance describes the data that the FDA plans to request, the uses it intends to make of the requested data, and the quality metrics it intends to calculate.

openFDA: The First Year in Perspective

On 22 May 2015, Taha Kass-Hout, MD, MS, gave an update on the openFDA project at the Big Data in Biomedicine conference at Stanford University.

His talk, coming a year after the first APIs were launched at openFDA, covered the progress that has been made with the project so far. Based on the three pillars of Open Data, Open Source, and Open Community, the openFDA project has spawned dozens of apps, thousands of community members, and millions of API calls. The video of this presentation can be viewed at https://open.fda.gov/update/first-year-in-perspective.

FDA Proposes to Revoke Two Biological Regulations

The FDA has proposed to remove two regulations that prescribe procedures for their review and classification of biological products licensed before 1 July 1972. The FDA took this action because the two regulations are obsolete and no longer necessary in light of other statutory and regulatory authorities established since 1972 that allow it to evaluate and monitor the safety and effectiveness of all biological products. In addition, other statutory and regulatory authorities authorize the FDA to revoke a license for products because they are not safe and effective or misbranded. The FDA took this action as part of its retrospective review of its regulations to promote improvement and innovation.

FDA Releases Report: “FDA Science Moving Forward”

The report entitled FDA Science Moving Forward details how the FDA has accelerated efforts to develop new approaches to engaging in synergistic collaborations both intramurally and with other government agencies, academia, industry, patient organizations, professional societies, and other stakeholders. The FDA discusses its efforts to attract, develop, and retain top scientific talent and enhance scientific training and continuing-education opportunities for its staff. In the final section of the report, it highlights examples of its scientific accomplishments, organized according to the eight priority areas that the FDA identified in its Strategic Plan.

SOUTH AMERICA

Fostering Cooperation and Strengthening Medical Product Regulatory Systems in the Americas

The FDA's, Office of International Programs (OIP) is announcing the availability of grant funds for the support of a single-source cooperative agreement to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for fostering cooperation and strengthening medical product regulatory systems in the Americas. The goal of the cooperative agreement is to build upon existing cooperation between OIP/FDA and PAHO to foster regulatory collaboration and strengthen regulatory capacity throughout the Americas.

References