The Department of Health was asked the following questions:

- Are there any examples of successful cooperation with (or learning from) Japan in your area or experience? Could it be replicated or expanded?
- If you had the resources would there be areas you would pursue cooperation with Japan for improving Australian health outcomes? What are the barriers to doing so (apart from resources)?

Medicines Regulation

Japan and Australia collaborate positively through the development of guidelines via the International Council for Harmonisation, of which the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA), Japan's equivalent to Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), is a founding member. The PDMA and TGA also co-vice chair the International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Agencies, further strengthening our partnership.

Both countries are active participants in the international oncology cluster and the pharmacometrics cluster of the European Medicines Agency 'OPEN' initiative. This provides the opportunity for discussions of submission issues, of which Japan is an active contributor. Australia has benefited from these discussion, particularly around the issues raised by the PMDA.

It's also important to note that there are extensive differences between how our agencies classify and regulate medicines which fall under the TGA's listed medicines framework which covers complementary medicines (e.g. vitamins, minerals, herbals, supplements).

Medical Research

Since 2010, the National Health Medical Research Council (NHMRC) has funded 27 projects to the value of AU $22,328,160 through all NHMRC grant schemes that involve collaboration with Japanese health and medical research teams. Through participation in the e-ASIA Joint Research Program, there are three projects to the value of AU $2.06 million that include collaboration with researchers from the University of Tokyo, Nagasaki University and Keio University.

Australian and Japanese researchers are collaborating on projects, some of which focus on:

- Understanding how malaria parasites evade immune responses, which is critical for development of vaccines and diagnostic tests.
- Developing capacity, methods, knowledge and tools to enhance post-marketing surveillance systems to improve information on medicine and device safety, effectiveness and utilisation.
- Investigating how the placenta develops and which are the most important factors that are required for a health placenta to form.
- Investigating West Nile virus and other viruses from the same group, to identify valuable information for the development of effective treatments.