

DH investigates case of undeclared Western drug ingredients detected in cream product prescribed by registered Chinese medicine practitioner (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (October 25) urged members of the public who consulted a registered Chinese medicine practitioner (CMP), Sung Lai-kwan, practising at Flat B, 4/F, Siu Fung Building, 9-17 Tin Lok Lane, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, to stop using a cream product she prescribed as it was found to contain undeclared Western drug ingredients.

Acting upon a suspected poisoning case reported by the Hospital Authority recently, the DH raided the above CMP's premises and seized a quantity of external preparations. The DH received test results of these preparations from the Government Laboratory today confirming that the sample of one type of yellow cream product (see photo) was found to contain undeclared Western drug ingredients, namely clobetasol propionate and miconazole. A woman aged 50 was arrested by the Police today for suspected illegal possession of Part 1 poisons and unregistered pharmaceutical products. Initial investigation revealed that the cream products were manufactured in the Mainland and imported by the above CMP for prescribing to her patients. Investigation is ongoing.

Clobetasol propionate, a corticosteroid, is a Part 1 poison and prescription medicine for treating inflammation. Inappropriate use of a corticosteroid may cause serious side effects such as Cushing's syndrome, with symptoms including moon face and muscle atrophy. Miconazole, a Part 1 poison, is an antifungal drug commonly used for the treatment of fungal skin infections. It can cause side effects such as itching, irritation and an allergic reaction when used topically.

The DH will set up a hotline (2961 8949) for public enquiries related to using cream products prescribed by the above CMP. The hotline will operate during weekdays from 9am to 5pm from tomorrow (October 26) onwards.

According to the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap 138), illegal possession of Part 1 poisons or unregistered pharmaceutical products is a criminal offence. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment. Upon completion of the investigation, the DH will consult the Department of Justice on prosecution matters. The DH will also refer the case to the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong for consideration of possible disciplinary action.

Members of the public who have been prescribed with cream products by the above CMP who feel unwell or are in doubt should consult health-care

professionals as soon as possible. They may submit the product concerned to the DH's Chinese Medicine Regulatory Office at 16/F, AIA Kowloon Tower, Landmark East, 100 How Ming Street, Kwun Tong, Kowloon, during office hours for disposal.

