

## DH urges public not to buy or consume product with undeclared controlled ingredients (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (January 28) appealed to the public not to buy or consume a product named Herbulgari as it was found to contain undeclared controlled drug ingredients.

Acting upon intelligence, samples of the above product were purchased earlier via an Internet website for analysis. The test results from the Government Laboratory revealed that the samples contained dexamethasone and piroxicam, which are Part 1 poisons under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap 138).

A joint operation with the Police was conducted last night (January 27). During the operation, a 49-year-old man was arrested by the Police for suspected illegal sale of Part 1 poisons and an unregistered pharmaceutical product. The DH's investigation is continuing.

Dexamethasone is a steroid drug used for treating inflammation. Its side effects include moon face, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, muscle atrophy, adrenal insufficiency and osteoporosis. Piroxicam is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug used for pain relief in musculoskeletal conditions, and its side effects include gastrointestinal discomfort, gastrointestinal disorders, nausea and skin reactions. Dexamethasone and piroxicam are prescription medicines which should only be used under the advice of a medical doctor and can only be supplied at pharmacies under the supervision of a registered pharmacist upon a doctor's prescription.

According to the Ordinance, all pharmaceutical products must be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be legally sold in the market. Illegal sale or possession of unregistered pharmaceutical products or Part 1 poisons are criminal offences. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The DH spokesman strongly urged members of the public not to buy products of unknown or doubtful composition, or to consume products from unknown sources. Members of the public who have purchased the above product should stop consuming it immediately. They should consult healthcare professionals for advice if feeling unwell after consumption.

The public may submit the above product to the Drug Office of the DH at Room 1801, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, during office hours for disposal.

