

Discussion held on “space oil drug” and cross-sectoral drug treatment and rehabilitation services between ND and healthcare professionals

Accompanied by the Cluster Chief Executive of New Territories East of the Hospital Authority (HA), Dr Chung Kin-lai, and the Hospital Chief Executive of Tai Po Hospital of the HA, Dr Sin Ngai-chuen, representatives of the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau visited the designated ward for substance abusers at Tai Po Hospital yesterday (February 18) to learn about the support provided to drug abusers and to discuss with frontline professionals combating "space oil drug" and treatment for the relevant drug abusers.

Hong Kong has long adopted a multi-modality approach in providing drug treatment and rehabilitation (T&R) services to meet the different needs of drug abusers from different backgrounds. The HA plays a crucial role in this regard. During the meeting with the medical and allied health personnel of Tai Po Hospital, the Commissioner for Narcotics, Mr Kesson Lee, expressed gratitude for their tireless support for patients. He said, "Collaboration is an important approach for effective drug T&R services. The ND encourages hospitals to strengthen collaboration with different sectors on various fronts. For example, the cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary collaborative model in Tai Po Hospital can effectively support drug-abusing patients, address their diverse backgrounds and T&R needs, and ultimately help them quit drugs."

Regarding the prevailing problem of "space oil drug", the medical and allied health professionals at Tai Po Hospital shared their research findings, observations, and treatment approaches for relevant patients. They noted a recent rise in the number of patients seeking medical services or even hospitalisation due to "space oil drug" abuse and expressed concerns that there was no shortage of young people among those patients. They also expressed worries about e-cigarettes becoming an apparatus for drug taking. Mr Lee indicated that the Government has launched targeted anti-"space oil drug" publicity in response to the situation and upon the listing of etomidate, the main active ingredient of "space oil drug", and its three analogues (metomidate, propoxate and isopropoxate) as dangerous drugs on February 14, 2025. In addition to education and publicity, T&R is also a component in addressing the drug problem. He pointed out that the Government will continue to encourage drug abusers to quit drugs on their own volition and expressed hope that abusers of "space oil drug" would seek early assistance from service units such as Substance Abuse Clinics of the HA and Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers in the community. All participants in the meeting agreed that "space oil drug" could cause harm to physical and mental health, and young people are no exception.

For issues related to "space oil drug" or other drug problems, the public can contact professional social workers for information or assistance through WhatsApp or WeChat at 98 186 186, or call the 24-hour hotline at 186 186.