

Sterility results on suspected counterfeit vaccines announced

The Department of Health (DH) today (August 7) announced that samples of suspected counterfeit human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines seized last month were found to have failed the sterility test.

The DH and Hong Kong Customs conducted joint operations at two medical centres on July 10 and July 12 respectively during which suspected counterfeit HPV vaccines were seized in both premises. Interim analytical results were announced on July 24 indicating that no hazardous impurities were detected in the samples. However, report of the sterility test issued by an accredited laboratory this afternoon indicated that the samples have failed the relevant tests, revealing the doubtful quality of the products.

"Failure of sterility test means that the samples may be contaminated with micro-organisms which may pose risk to those who have been administered with the products," a DH spokesman said.

According to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), any person who supplies a drug which is not of the nature or quality demanded by the purchaser shall be guilty of an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$10,000 and an imprisonment for three months.

The DH and Customs will proceed with prosecution matters in accordance with the advice from the Department of Justice.

"So far, the DH has not received any report on adverse reactions related to the HPV vaccines supplied by the two medical centres. People who have received HPV vaccines from the two medical centres are urged to seek advice from healthcare professionals if they are in doubt or feeling unwell. In addition, registered healthcare professionals are urged to only procure registered pharmaceutical products from licensed wholesale dealers," the spokesman said.