

CHP notified of imported case of Zika Virus Infection in Guangdong

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 11) closely monitoring an imported case of Zika Virus Infection reported in Guangdong. The CHP was notified by the Health Commission of Guangdong Province yesterday (December 10), and again urged the public to adopt strict anti-mosquito measures and safe sex during travel. Pregnant women should not travel to [areas with Zika virus transmission](#) (affected areas).

The male patient aged 33 returning from Cambodia arrived at Shenzhen International Airport on December 8. He was detected as febrile upon arrival. The case was laboratory confirmed subsequently, and he was under isolation and management in stable condition.

The CHP's Port Health Division (PHD) has introduced a requirement on aircraft disinsection for all inbound aircrafts from Zika-affected areas since April 2017 to prevent importation of diseases through infected mosquitoes. The PHD has also stepped up inspections and health promotions at boundary control points (BCPs) to maintain strict environmental hygiene with effective mosquito control.

"Routine health surveillance on body temperature of inbound travellers at all BCPs is ongoing. However, infected persons are mainly asymptomatic. Therefore, we urge those arriving from Zika-affected areas to apply insect repellent for at least 21 days upon arrival to reduce the risk of transmission," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"We are maintaining close liaison with the World Health Organization as well as overseas, neighbouring and Mainland health authorities to closely monitor the latest developments," the spokesman added.

Apart from [general measures on preventing mosquito bites and mosquito breeding](#), the public should take heed of the advice listed below:

A. Travelling abroad

- If going to affected areas, travellers, especially persons with immune disorders or severe chronic illnesses, should arrange a consultation with a doctor at least six weeks before the trip, and have extra preventive measures to avoid mosquito bites;
- During the trip, if travelling in rural affected areas, carry a portable bed net and apply permethrin (an insecticide) on it. Permethrin should not be applied to skin. Seek medical attention promptly if feeling unwell; and
- Travellers who return from affected areas should apply insect repellent

for at least 21 days after arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell e.g. having fever, should seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to a doctor.

B. Sexual transmission

- Travellers should consider not having sex during travel to affected areas, or else a condom should be used; and
- Male and female travellers returning from affected areas should abstain from sex for at least three months and at least two months respectively upon return, or else a condom should be used.

C. Pregnant women

- Pregnant women should not travel to affected areas. Women preparing for pregnancy should note Point B above. If they or their male sex partners plan to travel to affected areas, they should consult their doctors for advice on the risk. Use of mosquito repellent containing DEET during travel and returning from these areas for a period of at least 21 days are advised for all travellers including pregnant women;
- Attend antenatal follow up regularly and tell the attending doctor the history of recent travel;
- Observe for symptoms of Zika Virus Infection and seek medical advice as soon as possible if feeling unwell; and
- Abstain from sex with partner who had travelled to affected areas, or else a condom should be used throughout the pregnancy.

The public may visit the Zika pages of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the [Outbound Travel Alert](#) page of the Security Bureau and [anti-mosquito precautions for women](#) for more information.

LCQ11: Rodent prevention and control

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Chiang Lai-wan and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (December 11):

Question:

The world's first case of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus (HEV) was found in Hong Kong in September last year. Since then, a total of nine cases of this type have been identified globally with eight of them being

found in Hong Kong. Some academics consider that the fact that a number of rat HEV infection cases were found in Hong Kong within a short time span has reflected signs of persistent spreads and outbreaks of the disease. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the latest progress of the Government's anti-rodent work and investigations into the relevant infection cases, as well as the up-to-date results of the rat HEV detection tests performed on rat samples;

(2) whether it will conduct regular anti-rodent operation in designated target areas with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of rodent prevention and control work in the districts; if so, of the timetable and details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) given that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is currently conducting tests on different rodent baits for identifying the most suitable one for the situation in Hong Kong, of the details of the tests concerned;

(4) given that FEHD has, since April this year, put on trial the use of night-vision and thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence functionality to monitor the whereabouts of rodents, of the effect of such monitoring work in eradicating the rodent problem;

(5) whether it will review the methodology for calculating the Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR), and include in the formula for calculating RIR the number of complaints about rodent infestation, the number of live rodents caught, the number of dead rodents collected, etc. with a view to reflecting more comprehensively the seriousness of rodent infestation in the districts; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(6) how the Pest Control Steering Committee will step up its efforts in coordinating and synergising interdepartmental rodent control work?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) After confirming the eight cases of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus (HEV), the Government has conducted immediate and intensive anti-rodent work in the vicinity of the patients' residence. In so far as public places are concerned, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has already strengthened cleansing services, carried out rodent prevention and control work (including placing rodenticides and trapping devices as well as filling rat holes) and taken enforcement actions against illegal disposal of refuse. As for private places and public housing estates, FEHD, together with property management companies of private housing estates, the Housing Department as well as District Councillors, have conducted site inspections to observe the rodent infestation situation and provided professional advice

and technical guidance on placing rodenticides and trapping devices, destroying rat holes, improving rodent proofing structures in buildings and stepping up refuse clearing work etc.

Upon notification of the cases, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has immediately commenced epidemiological investigations to determine the source and route of infection, which however cannot be confirmed based on the available epidemiological information. The CHP's investigation is still in progress.

Regarding the laboratory tests for HEV, the DH has been working in close collaboration with the Hospital Authority and the Department of Microbiology of the University of Hong Kong (HKU). Since November 2018, the DH has enhanced the surveillance of HEV by conducting further testing on rat HEV in the samples collected from HEV patients, in addition to regular testing on human HEV types.

As for the tests performed on rat samples, HKU's Department of Microbiology has performed 62 tests in 2019 on samples provided by the FEHD and detected rat HEV in one of the rat samples collected in Wong Tai Sin in May 2019.

(2) In view of the effectiveness of anti-rodent operations in designated target areas over the past two years, the FEHD plans to conduct such exercises regularly. An eight-week operation will be carried out on a territory-wide basis in both May and November 2020. Each District Environmental Hygiene Office of the FEHD will identify target areas in its district, taking into account factors including the Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR), the number of complaints received, views of the local community and the number of food premises and "three-nil" buildings. The FEHD will also consider the views of District Councillors. The operation will target at the three fundamental survival conditions of rodents, namely food, harbourage and passages, i.e. elimination of the food sources and hiding places of rodents as well as blockage of their dispersal routes. Multi-pronged strategies including improving environmental hygiene, stepping up rodent disinfection and reinforcing enforcement will be adopted to strengthen rodent prevention and control work. The FEHD will also collaborate with District Councils and District Offices of the Home Affairs Department (HAD) to organise anti-rodent promotional activities and encourage active participation of the community.

(3) The FEHD has been monitoring the effectiveness of rodenticides in use currently, including whether rodents have developed resistance to the rodenticides.

Upon recommendation of the World Health Organization, the FEHD invited a British anti-rodent expert to Hong Kong in November 2019 to advise on the local rodent control work. The expert confirmed the effectiveness of the methods currently adopted by the FEHD while suggesting that enhancement can be made by further improving environmental hygiene with more public participation. As rodents are omnivores with food choices depending on environmental conditions, time and weather etc., no particular type of food

is appealing to all rodents. The expert recommended using different types of baits at the same time and place to attract rodents. The FEHD will examine the effectiveness of using mixed rodent baits through tests in the coming few months.

(4) and (5) At present, the FEHD conducts RIR surveys by setting baits in selected areas. The percentage of baits bitten will be used to infer the distribution of rodents in public places. There is no internationally adopted RIR. The FEHD has, when devising the RIR, made reference to overseas practices and the actual situation of Hong Kong. We are open to methods on improving the RIR.

In devising and implementing rodent prevention and control work, government departments concerned will take into account, in addition to the RIR surveys, factors such as complaint figures and reports, views of the local community and trails left by rodents found during inspections, in order to have a comprehensive assessment of the rodent problem in the district concerned and carry out targeted anti-rodent operations in problematic areas.

The FEHD is studying the use of thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence analytical function for monitoring the areas and extent of rodent activities. Initial test results have shown that the data can quantify and assess the effectiveness of anti-rodent work by directly comparing the rodent population density before and after anti-rodent operations. The technology can also be used to identify rodents' entry points, travel routes and areas they frequently visit, so that rodenticides and trapping devices can be placed in a more effective manner and more targeted rodent control measures can be implemented. The FEHD has planned to conduct field trials in Kowloon City District in early 2020 in order to update and upgrade the quantifying functions of the RIR. Furthermore, cameras will be installed before and after anti-rodent operations in designated target areas next year with a view to quantifying and reviewing the effectiveness of the operations.

(6) The Pest Control Steering Committee (PCSC) led by the Food and Health Bureau is responsible for formulating policies on pest control, promoting inter-departmental co-ordination and regularly reviewing the effectiveness of pest control measures carried out by government bureaux and departments. The PCSC has set objectives in three areas for its work plan in 2019, namely strengthening prevention, co-ordination and surveillance.

On enhancing inter-departmental co-ordination, the PCSC launched a territory-wide cleaning campaign in May 2019, requiring various government departments to strengthen their cleaning and anti-rodent work. Among these, the FEHD, HAD and Highways Department have, through intelligence exchanges, carried out improvement works and enhanced cleaning at back alleys where there are hygiene problems. The Hong Kong Housing Authority, with FEHD's technical support, has installed rodent-proofing structures in public housing estates. The Buildings Department and the Architectural Services Department have also promulgated guidelines on incorporating rodent-proofing design in new buildings for building professionals' reference. These guidelines will

also serve as reference for renovation of old buildings. In addition, the FEHD has stepped up enforcement against irregularities of food premises such as food preparation at rear lanes. The FEHD will continue to provide technical support and professional training to various government departments.

LCQ15: Handling domestic violence problem

Following is a question by the Hon Elizabeth Quat and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (December 11):

Question:

It is learnt that domestic violence is a social issue of global concern. The victims usually suffer psychological abuse, bodily injuries or even sexual violence, and most of the batterers are their family members. The information of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) shows that there were 2 937 newly reported spouse/cohabitant battering cases in 2018, and among the victims concerned, 2 387 were female (i.e. 81.3 per cent). Regarding the handling of domestic violence problem, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) Of the following details of each of the refuge centres for women and the Family Crisis Support Centre currently subvented by SWD and operated by non-governmental organizations: the name of the centre, the district in which the centre is located, and the number of accommodation places available (with a breakdown of the number of accommodation places by (i) gender of the service targets, (ii) whether or not they are members of the ethnic minorities and (iii) whether or not they are new arrivals);

(2) Given that the maximum period of stay, in respect of the temporary accommodation service currently provided by the refuge centres for women, is usually two weeks, and that period may be extended to three months when necessary, of the considerations and criteria based on which the authorities set such limits on the period of stay;

(3) Of the details of (a) the Batterer Intervention Programme and (b) the Anti-Violence Programme implemented by the authorities, including (i) the numbers of participants, (ii) the gender of the participants and (iii) the effectiveness of the programmes respectively, in each of the past three years;

(4) Of the number of participants of the Support Programme for Enhancing Peaceable Relationship since it was launched in October last year, as well as

the age/gender profile of the participants; and

(5) Whether the authorities have provided housing assistance under the Compassionate Rehousing Scheme to victims of domestic violence or persons whose families are in crisis; if so, of the application procedure, and the number of persons receiving such assistance in the past three years?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) At present, there are five Refuge Centres for Women (Refuge Centres) across the territory, including Harmony House, Wai On Home for Women, Serene Court, Sunrise Court and Dawn Court, providing a total of 268 accommodation places. Besides, there are one Family Crisis Support Centre (FCSC) and one Multi-purpose Crisis Intervention and Support Centre (CEASE Crisis Centre) providing 50 and 80 temporary or short-term accommodation places respectively. Given the nature of their respective services, the address of FCSC in Kwun Tong is made public whereas the addresses of the Refuge Centres and CEASE Crisis Centre are kept confidential.

While Refuge Centres provide places for women only, FCSC and CEASE Crisis Centre provide places for both genders without quota limit for each gender. Besides, there is no quota limit for ethnic minorities or new arrivals to Hong Kong in the above centres and hence no breakdown was available according to each category of service users.

(2) Refuge Centres provide temporary accommodation and support services for victims of domestic violence or family crisis and their children during the crisis period. In general, the accommodation is provided for abused women for two weeks and the maximum period of stay can be extended to three months where necessary. For cases that require further extension of stay, social workers may give due consideration according to the actual needs of the abused women such as their safety upon discharge, availability of appropriate accommodation, financial condition, emotional support and child care arrangement, etc.

(3) On the basis of casework service, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) provides the Batterer Intervention Programme (BIP) for persons who have used violence towards their spouses/heterosexual co-habitants. The target participants of this 13-session counselling programme are batterers who wish to maintain and improve their intimate partner relationships. The programme aims to help the perpetrators understand intimate partners' violence and its impact, learn about non-violent approaches of conflict resolution and improve relationship with their partners. According to the evaluation study of the pilot project of BIP from April 2006 to March 2008 and the experience of frontline social workers, the combination of casework and group counselling service and the provision of sole casework service were both effective in changing perpetrators' violent behaviour. As for enhancing perpetrators' relationship with their partners, participants of BIP demonstrated more

significant positive changes than people who only received casework counselling. The positive changes also helped them continue to get along with their partners in non-violent ways. In the past three years, there were a total of 152 batterers participating in the programme. Details are as follows:

Participants	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Male	24	7	41
Female	19	44	17
Total	43	51	58

The Anti-Violence Programme (AVP) is a psycho-educational programme approved by the Director of Social Welfare. The court, in granting a non-molestation order under the Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance (Cap 189), may require the respondent to attend AVP. It aims to reduce the risk of reoccurrence of violence and to change the violent attitude and behaviour of the participants, so as to enhance the protection of the victims of domestic violence. AVP provides service for those, including persons acting in a violent or molesting manner towards their spouses/former spouses/cohabitants/former cohabitants, children or other family members, who were covered under the aforementioned Ordinance. The programme consists of 12 to 14 sessions conducted in the form of individual or group counselling. The number of participants in the programme depends on the number of referrals by the Court. In the past three years, there were a total of two male batterers referred by the Court to participate in the programme.

(4) Since October 2018, SWD has subvented three non-governmental organisations to operate the Support Programme for Enhancing Peaceable Relationship (SPeaR) at five service clusters in Hong Kong. SPeaR aims at providing an early and flexible intervention for batterers/potential batterers to prevent and stop intimate partner violence (IPV) as well as improve the quality of their intimate relationships. It also provides support service for children who have witnessed or been exposed to IPV and victims of IPV, with a view to protecting them from harm.

Up to September 2019, a total of 438 participants had participated in the Programme in the form of individual/group/family educational activities, of whom 151 were male and 91 were female who were batterers/potential batterers, 8 were male and 41 were female victims and 147 were children aged 18 or below who had witnessed or been exposed to IPV.

(5) Compassionate Rehousing (CR) is a form of special housing assistance, which aims at providing housing assistance for individuals and families (including victims of domestic violence or family crisis) who have genuine and imminent long-term housing needs but, owing to their social and/or medical needs arising from specific circumstances or experience, have no other feasible means to solve their housing problems. CR has to be assessed comprehensively by professional social workers or approved persons. SWD is

responsible for recommending cases to the Housing Department (HD). On receipt of CR recommendations, HD will arrange detailed eligibility vetting in respect of the clients and allocation of public rental housing (PRH) units for eligible cases.

â€‹SWD does not have the statistics on the number of victims of domestic violence or family crisis having been allocated PRH through CR.

SED on handling of teachers' misconduct

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, after officiating at the opening ceremony of the Learning and Teaching Expo 2019 today (December 11):

Reporter: Secretary, so yesterday the CE said that the Education Bureau should follow up seriously with teachers who violate work ethics. Would you explain how is the bureau going to act in this aspect? Thank you.

Secretary for Education: We always have been taking possible misconduct of teachers very seriously and so whenever we receive a complaint or we are notified of any cases of teachers being arrested or charged for some offences, we take these cases seriously. And we will consider the background of the case, what's happening actually in these cases and then we decide whether there is misconduct on the teacher's part. So if there is really some misconduct behaviour, we will consider necessary disciplinary actions as we are the registration authority for teachers which include, maybe a warning, a reprimand or even de-registration if their offences are very serious in nature.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Refund arrangements for World Cultures Festival 2019 programme "Cook"

The performance of "Cook" presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, originally scheduled for October 27 (Sunday) at 8pm at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Studio Theatre, has been cancelled.

Ticket holders are advised to take their original intact tickets (with stubs) for cash refunds at the locations listed below from 10am to 9.30pm daily during the specified period. Late applications for refunds will not be accepted.

Refund period: December 12 (Thursday) to January 11, 2020 (Saturday)

Venue: URB TIX Box Office of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre
URB TIX Box Office of Hong Kong City Hall

For enquiries, please call 2370 1044.