

LCQ10: Osteoporosis

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 (November 20):

Question:

It has been reported that as indicated by the findings of a medical research, one in three women and one in five men who are over 50 years old will suffer from an osteoporotic fracture at some point in their lives. In addition, there are about 10 000 new cases of hip fracture each year in Hong Kong and, among such cases, one-fifth of the patients pass away within one year, about half of them sustain permanent impairment of mobility, and about half of them need to be admitted to residential care homes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of osteoporotic fracture patients who were treated in public hospitals in each of the past three years, and the expenditure so incurred, with a tabulated breakdown by the body region of the fracture;
- (2) as some medical practitioners have pointed out that quite a number of members of the public have little knowledge about osteoporosis, of the Government's measures to step up the relevant publicity work, so as to raise public awareness about prevention of osteoporosis; and
- (3) whether it will consider implementing, under a public-private partnership approach, a community-wide bone mineral density screening for early identification and treatment of osteoporosis patients; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Osteoporosis is a chronic metabolic disease of bone which leads to a reduction in bone density. It causes bones to become more fragile and prone to breaking. In consultation with the the Department of Health (DH) and the Hospital Authority (HA), our reply to the various parts of the question raised by Dr the Hon Chiang Lai-wan is as follows:

- (1) The HA does not maintain statistics on patients with osteoporosis and those with fractures, as well as the related expenditure on treatment.
- (2) Prevention of osteoporosis should begin by building strong and healthy bones at an early age. To avoid or reduce bone density loss and to minimise fracture risk, all people regardless of age should adopt a healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved by doing regular physical and weight-bearing exercises, maintaining optimal body weight, eating a balanced diet for

adequate calcium and vitamin D intake, having appropriate sunlight exposure for vitamin D synthesis, and refraining from smoking and excessive drinking. Elderly persons should take extra fall prevention precautions to further reduce the risks of fracture and other complications.

The DH's Elderly Health Service provides health education on the prevention of osteoporosis and falls that may lead to fractures. Its Woman Health Service also provides health education on bone health. Health education messages are disseminated through such channels as health talks, individual counselling, leaflets and websites. The DH also reviews regularly health education resources to meet the needs of the community.

(3) Since there is no sufficient scientific evidence to support a territory-wide osteoporosis screening programme (including one for the elderly), the DH does not provide bone mineral density screening service. However, eligible elderly persons aged 65 or above are issued with elderly health care vouchers of \$2,000 each year for seeking private primary healthcare services that suit their needs, which may include the management of osteoporosis and other chronic diseases. People who are at risk of developing osteoporosis due to, for example, underweight, previous history of bone fracture, premature menopause, smoking habit or heavy drinking, or a family history of osteoporosis or fracture, should take active control of the risk factors and seek medical advice on appropriate medical options, such as bone mineral density assessment or treatment.

In respect of public-private collaboration, the HA will, while taking account of relevant expert advice, continue to communicate with the public and patient groups, and work closely with stakeholders to look into the feasibility of introducing new initiatives. In exploring the launch of new Public-Private Partnership (PPP) programmes, the HA will carefully consider a number of factors, including the service demand, case suitability, potential complexity, capacity and readiness in the private market, as well as the long-term financial sustainability of the PPP Fund.

LCQ21: Participation of public healthcare sector staff in exchange activities on Mainland

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Pierre Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (November 20):

Question:

Regarding the situation of staff members of the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health (DH) participating in the Course on National Affairs for Hong Kong Professionals (the Course) and other exchange activities on the Mainland, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of invitations received by HA for nominating staff members to participate in the Course, and the number of staff members nominated by HA to participate in the Course, in each year since 2015, with a breakdown by the grade and rank to which they belonged in the following table;

Staff members		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Medical grade						
	(i)	Chief of Service				
	(ii)	Consultant				
	(iii)	Senior Medical Officer/Associate Consultant				
	(iv)	Medical Officer/Resident				
Nursing grade						
	(i)	Senior Nursing Officer or above				
	(ii)	Department Operations Manager				
	(iii)	Ward Manager/Nurse Specialist/ Nursing Officer/Advanced Practice Nurse				
	(iv)	Registered Nurse				
	(v)	Enrolled Nurse				
Allied health professional						
Executive						
Others (please specify)						
Total number of participating staff						

(2) of the amount of expenditure incurred by HA arising from its staff members' participation in the Course, and the total number of days of paid study leave granted by HA to such staff members, in each year since 2015; the number of days such Courses lasted (if the number varied, set out the information by commencement date);

(3) of the year starting from which HA nominated staff members to participate in the Course, and the cumulative number of staff members who have participated in the Course to date; and

(4) of the number of invitations received by DH for nominating staff members to participate in (i) the Course and (ii) other exchange activities on the Mainland, in each year since 2015, and set out the relevant figures respectively according to the formats in (1) to (3)?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health (DH), my reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Dr Hon Pierre Chan is as follows:

(1) to (3) The HA all along attaches importance to providing comprehensive training and development opportunities for staff of all grades and ranks. Relevant clinical and non-clinical training as well as exchange activities are arranged from time to time. The HA also accepts invitations and sponsorships from various organisations for staff to attend local or non-local training and academic exchanges, including the Course on National Affairs for Hong Kong Professionals (the Course) organised by the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Arranged by the Chinese Academy of Governance, the Course takes place in Mainland cities for a period of normally six days. The HA is one of the organisations invited to take part in the Course. Staff enrolment is voluntary subject to nomination by respective departments, Hospital Chief Executives and Cluster Chief Executives, and provided that assessment has been made to confirm that the staff's work and the HA's services will not be affected. In the past five years, the HA has, upon invitation, nominated 152 staff members to join ten Courses. Participants included staff from the medical, nursing and allied health professional grades, as well as executive and management staff. The relevant figures are tabulated below:

Grade	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Medical	18	17	9	17	7
Nursing	9	1	3	6	7
Allied health professional	6	0	2	3	3
Executive	8	7	12	7	10
Total number of participating staff	41	25	26	33	27

Under its human resources policy, the HA may provide support in the form of financial sponsorship and/or study leave, where appropriate, for staff to attend training and development activities. As far as the Course is concerned, the organiser is responsible for meals, accommodation, local transport and the course fee, whereas the HA provides return air passage and study leave for its nominees.

The HA has always attached great importance to providing training and development opportunities for its staff. A variety of clinical, non-clinical and related training programmes as well as exchange opportunities are

arranged for staff to broaden their scope of training. In general, apart from offering training opportunities on clinical professional knowledge and skills, the HA also arranges various kinds of training for healthcare professionals, such as training on leadership, management and communication skills. The Course, being a non-clinical training programme, aims to enhance participants' understanding of the Mainland's systems and policies in various aspects, including healthcare system and development.

(4) The DH is committed to providing staff with training and development opportunities by motivating them to participate in various professional training. In addition, the DH will also arrange staff to attend a wide spectrum of training, such as leadership and management, languages and communication skills, etc.

The DH has not received any invitation for nominations regarding the Course since 2015. However, the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI) has been inviting government departments regularly to consider nominating officers to attend their national studies courses/thematic study programmes of the Mainland for civil servants. Officers of the DH attend these courses/programmes on a voluntary basis. The nominations must be made by the relevant Heads of Grade. Having assessed and confirmed that the participation will not affect the staff's work and the services provided by the DH, the list of nominations will be passed to CSTDI for selection. In the past five years, the DH, upon invitation, has nominated a total of 80 officers to attend CSTDI's national studies courses/thematic study programmes. Participants included doctors, nurses, para-medical staff, and executive staff. The relevant figures are tabulated below:

Grade	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Doctor	2	3	10	4	8
Nurse	3	2	3	2	2
Para-medical staff	3	1	5	5	4
Executive staff	2	5	0	5	11
Total number of participating staff	10	11	18	16	25

Regarding the above-mentioned national studies courses/thematic study programmes, while CSTDI provides participants with round-trip passage, board and lodging, local transportation, course fee and study grant, the DH grants study leave to the nominated staff.

LCQ20: Traffic conditions in Causeway Bay and Happy Valley

Following is a question by the Hon Paul Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (November 20):

Question:

Some residents have complained that traffic congestion frequently occurs in the vicinity of Caroline Hill Road, Ventris Road, Link Road and Leighton Road in Happy Valley and Causeway Bay, particularly during evening commuting hours on weekdays and at noon on weekends. During peak hours, the tailback even reaches Broadwood Road, thus paralysing the traffic to and from the Broadwood district, Jardine's Lookout and Tai Hang. During the time when matches are held in the Hong Kong Stadium, vehicles can hardly move in the areas concerned. In addition, driving test candidates learning driving and taking road tests in these areas are also major causes for the traffic congestion. On the other hand, the Government is planning to use the site of the ex-Electrical and Mechanical Services Department Headquarters and the adjacent sites on Caroline Hill Road for the construction of a new district court and for commercial purposes, including the provision of as many as 600 car parking spaces. Some residents are worried that the development project, once implemented, will inevitably aggravate the traffic congestion in the areas concerned. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the respective numbers of persons across the territory who (i) learned driving and (ii) took road tests, as well as the respective rates of year-on-year increase, in each of the past three years; among such persons who took road tests, of the number and percentage of those who chose to take the tests in the So Kon Po Driving Test Centre in Wan Chai;

(2) whether it conducted any assessment in the past three years on the traffic load caused by driving test candidates learning driving and taking road tests in the aforesaid areas; if so, of the assessment outcome; if not, whether it will do so expeditiously;

(3) as some members of the public have criticised that with an increasing number of persons learning driving in recent years, coupled with the busy traffic in the adjacent business districts, the aforesaid areas are not suitable for activities of learning driving and conducting road tests, and that the aforesaid development project, upon its completion, will bring extra traffic load to the areas which may aggravate road congestion, whether the authorities will expeditiously relocate the two driving test centres in the areas (particularly the So Kon Po Driving Test Centre), or adjust the driving test routes, so as to alleviate the traffic load in the areas concerned; if so, of the details (including the sites identified and the timetable); if not, the reasons for that;

(4) as vehicles often stop inside the yellow box markings at three road junctions in the areas (namely the junction of Leighton Road, Caroline Hill Road and Hoi Ping Road, the junction of Caroline Hill Road and Link Road, as well as the junction of Broadwood Road and Ventris Road), causing obstruction to the traffic, whether the Police will deploy traffic police officers to station there during traffic peak hours to step up law enforcement and direct traffic; and

(5) as the aforesaid development project has been drawn up on the basis of the data of a traffic flow survey conducted more than two years ago, whether the Government will conduct a survey afresh in order to more accurately assess if the roads in the areas can cope with the traffic flow to be generated by the project?

Reply:

President,

All along, the Government monitors the traffic conditions in various districts closely (including the Causeway Bay and Happy Valley areas) in order to maintain smooth traffic for the convenience of the commuting public. Regarding the Causeway Bay and Happy Valley areas, when major events take place at the Hong Kong Stadium or the Happy Valley Racecourse, the Transport Department (TD) and the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) would implement special traffic arrangements to divert traffic as appropriate.

Our reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Paul Tse is as follows:

(1) The numbers of valid learner's driving licence holders and the numbers of road tests arranged (including the respective year-on-year changes), as well as the numbers of road tests arranged at the So Kon Po Driving Test Centre (including the percentages to the total numbers of road tests arranged) in the past three years (2016 to 2018) are set out in the Annex.

(2) and (5) From 2017 to 2019, the traffic consultant engaged by the Highways Department conducted an assessment on the impact of rezoning of the Caroline Hill Road site for development (the development project) on local traffic. The assessment has already taken into consideration the traffic volume arising from activities of those learning driving and taking road tests. Currently, the traffic conditions of the junctions in the vicinity of the site are still acceptable, and most vehicles are able to clear the junctions without waiting for more than one traffic signal cycle during peak hours.

At the same time, the consultant has assessed the traffic impact in the fifth year after completion of the development project (i.e. 2031) on the basis of the traffic data of 2017, taking into account additional traffic flow to be generated by the development project and other planned developments or redevelopments nearby, as well as the projected annual growth in traffic volume.

As recommended in the traffic assessment, when taking forward the development project, the project proponent would need to improve the junction of Caroline Hill Road and Leighton Road and that of Caroline Hill Road and Link Road so as to cope with the additional traffic upon completion of the project and to avoid creating unacceptable impact on the local traffic.

(3) Given the results of the above-mentioned traffic assessment, TD has no plan to adjust the routes for driving tests in the areas.

All along, TD strives to identify suitable sites in the territory for setting up additional driving test centres. Prior to the identification of any suitable replacement sites, TD has no plan to relocate the Happy Valley and So Kon Po Driving Test Centres.

(4) The Police has been mindful of the traffic conditions in the Causeway Bay and Happy Valley areas. Appropriate enforcement action has been taken against traffic offenders having regard to the actual circumstances in accordance with the "Selected Traffic Enforcement Priorities" so as to ensure road safety and smooth traffic flow. The Police will closely monitor the traffic conditions near the yellow box markings of the junction of Leighton Road, Caroline Hill Road and Hoi Ping Road, the junction of Caroline Hill Road and Link Road, and the junction of Broadwood Road and Ventris Road. Additional traffic police officers will be deployed to control traffic and summons action be stepped up against those driving into yellow box markings wilfully.

LCQ18: Enhanced tax deduction for research and development expenditures

Following is a question by the Hon Charles Mok and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, in the Legislative Council today (November 20):

Question:

The Inland Revenue (Amendment) (No. 7) Ordinance 2018 came into operation on November 2, 2018. The expenditures incurred by enterprises on research and development (R&D) activities conducted on April 1, 2018 or thereafter are classified into Type A and Type B. Type A expenditures are qualified for the current 100 per cent tax deduction. For Type B expenditures, the deduction is 300 per cent for the first \$2 million and 200 per cent for the remaining amount. "Qualifying R&D activities" are classified into out-sourced and in-house R&D activities. The amounts of (i) payments made to "designated local research institutions" (DLRIs) in respect of the former and (ii) "qualifying expenditures" (i.e. expenditures in relation to employees and consumable items) paid in respect of the latter by enterprises

are Type B expenditures, which are qualified for the aforesaid tax deduction at a higher percentage. R&D service providers are required to apply to the Innovation and Technology Commission for designation as DLRI. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of applications for designation as DLRI received, approved and rejected to date by the authorities; if there are rejected applications, of the reasons for that;
- (2) of the number of enterprises which have applied for tax deduction for R&D expenditures since the aforesaid Ordinance came into operation, as well as the total R&D expenditures involved, with a breakdown by the following types of expenditures:
 - Type B expenditures
 - (i) expenditures on out-sourced qualifying R&D activities,
 - (ii) qualifying expenditures on in-house qualifying R&D activities,
 - Type A expenditures
 - (iii) other expenditures on in-house qualifying R&D activities, and
 - (iv) expenditures on other R&D activities; and
- (3) whether it has plans to provide additional tax concessions for R&D related activities; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

To encourage more enterprises to conduct research and development (R&D) locally and promote technological innovation and economic development in Hong Kong, the Government implemented last year the enhanced tax deduction for expenditures incurred on "qualifying R&D activities" by enterprises. R&D expenditures eligible for deduction are classified into "Type A expenditures" which are qualified for 100 per cent deduction, and "Type B expenditures" which are qualified for the enhanced tax deduction. Type B expenditures have a two-tiered deduction regime. The deduction is 300 per cent for the first \$2 million of the aggregate amount of payments made to "designated local research institutions" (DLRI) for "qualifying R&D activities" and expenditures incurred by enterprises from carrying out in-house qualifying R&D activities. The remaining amount is qualified for 200 per cent deduction. There is no cap on the amount of enhanced tax deduction and the deduction is applicable to all enterprises. Enterprises can claim the enhanced tax deduction in relation to the "qualifying R&D expenditures" on or after April 1, 2018.

Our reply to the respective questions is as follows:

(1) The Innovation and Technology Commission has so far received five applications for designation as DLRI. Among these applications, three have been approved, one was withdrawn by the applicant and the remaining one was not approved mainly because the R&D activities conducted by the applicant did not meet the definition of "qualifying R&D activity" under the Inland Revenue Ordinance (IRO). Besides, we have already designated 30 local universities, colleges and public research institutions as DLRI under the IRO. In other words, there are currently 33 DLRI in total.

(2) According to the information provided by Inland Revenue Department, up to end October 2019, among the profits tax returns received, there are 60 applications claiming R&D tax deduction for 2018/19 assessment year pursuant to the amended IRO. The relevant expenditures for claiming tax deduction are as follows:

Category	In-house R&D (\$ million)	Outsourcing R&D (\$ million)	Total (\$ million)
Type A Expenditures	82.0	32.4	114.4
Type B Expenditures	825.6	40.3	865.9
Subtotal:	907.6	72.7	980.3

(3) As the implementation of the R&D tax deduction measure is still in the initial stage, we need time to review the response and effectiveness of the measure. At this stage, there is no plan to further broaden the tax concessions.

[LCQ13: Illegally affixed bills and posters](#)

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Priscilla Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (November 20):

Question:

Under section 104A of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), no bill or poster shall be displayed or affixed on any Government land, except with the written permission of the Authority. Some members of the public have relayed that since June this year, a large quantities of leaflets, posters, sticky notes, etc. have been affixed, for expression of various views, without permission at public places (e.g. footbridges, pedestrian subways and perimeter fences) in many districts. Such affixed items have not only caused environmental hygiene problems but also led to clashes among members of the public with different political views. However, the government departments concerned have not actively addressed the problem, making such members of the public feel very dissatisfied. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the government departments concerned have, since June this year, found any items affixed without their permission at the places under their management; if so, of the details, and whether they have forthwith removed such items; if they have not forthwith removed such items, of the reasons for that;

(2) whether the Government has, since June this year, assessed if it constitutes an administrative omission on the part of the departments concerned for failure to remove those illegally affixed items within a time period expected by members of the public; if it has assessed, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will make special arrangements to expedite the clearance of illegally affixed items; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) In the past few months, displays of bills without written permission of the Authority (commonly known as "Lennon Wall") have been found on Government land in various districts.

Relevant departments have been closely monitoring the situation, and conducting timely clean-up operations in their respective venues/public places (including locations which may affect pedestrians' safety or cause serious environmental hygiene problems). As at November 17, 2019, joint clean-up operations were conducted at some 160 locations across the territory by relevant departments.

(3) Inter-departmental joint clean-up operations on unauthorised displays are conducted on an ongoing basis. The Government has made its best effort to re-deploy existing manpower and engage additional staff as and when necessary to remove unauthorised displays in public places on Government land as soon as possible.