

Government requests testing service provider to take serious follow-up action on data input error

A service provider of COVID-19 testing of the Department of Health (DH) reported that human errors were made during data input and uploading, resulting in notifications of negative test results being sent to a wrong mobile number or not being sent. The incident involved 14 deep throat saliva specimens submitted to the DH's Yuen Chau Kok Chest Clinic on May 6. No positive cases were involved.

The testing service provider concerned, BGI, has reviewed the test results and rectified the registration information. Affected persons will receive SMS messages containing the results of earlier testing re-sent by the system. The incident has no relationship with the accuracy or validity of the testing. The Food and Health Bureau extended apologies to those affected for any inconvenience caused.

In view of the above incident, the Government has issued a warning letter as per the service contract and instructed the service provider to investigate and follow up on the incident seriously, particularly in reviewing the current workflow of data entry and result uploading so as to ensure that relevant improvement measures are duly implemented. The Government will continue to suspend assigning BGI to provide service to any mobile specimen collection stations. Furthermore, the Government will take into account the overall performance of service providers, including their performance in respect of information management as well as the relevant audit mechanism, when making assessments on the awarding of testing services contracts in the future so that there would be no occurrence of similar incidents.

CHP follows up on case of Candida auris

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (May 11) following up on a case of *Candida auris* involving a resident of a residential care home for the elderly (RCHE), and reminded members of the public on the proper use of antimicrobials and maintaining personal hygiene against the disease.

The patient is an 85-year-old man with underlying illnesses who lives in

an RCHE. He was admitted to Yan Chai Hospital (YCH) on May 4 for his underlying illnesses. Candida auris was detected from the culture of his combined axilla, groin and nasal swab taken on admission screening in YCH. The patient is currently in YCH for the management of his underlying illnesses with stable condition.

Officers of the CHP conducted a site visit to the RCHE concerned today, and the RCHE is advised to adopt necessary infection control measures. An investigation by the CHP is ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP explained, "Candida is a fungus commonly found in the natural world, particularly in moist and warm environments. In humans, it is commonly found in body sites such as the oral cavity, the digestive tract, skin and the vagina. It is a common fungus living on or in the human body but can occasionally cause infections, especially in individuals with impaired immunity."

Among all the species, Candida auris is more drug-resistant than other candida species. Infections have varied from being mild to potentially life-threatening or fatal, depending on which part of the body is affected and the general health of the patient. The drug category for treating the disease, however, is basically no different from the antifungal drugs generally used for treating serious fungal infections. All these drugs have been registered and are available in the local market. However, Candida auris is known to be resistant to many of these potential drugs of choice which will limit the therapeutic options and affect the treatment outcome.

The spokesman stressed that proper use of antimicrobials and maintaining personal hygiene, especially hand hygiene, are crucial to the prevention of emergence and cross-transmission of Candida auris.

Cluster of Multi-drug Resistant Acinetobacter cases in Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital made the following announcement today (May 11):

Three male patients (aged 62 to 87) of a surgical ward have been confirmed as carriers of Multi-drug Resistant Acinetobacter since May 1. The three patients are currently under medical surveillance and isolation treatment with stable condition.

Following the activation of the Emergency Response Level in public hospitals, the visiting arrangement for the ward has been suspended. The following enhanced infection control measures have been stepped up according to the established guidelines:

1. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of the wards concerned;
2. Application of stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene for staff and patients; and
3. Enhanced patient and environmental screening procedures.

The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation in the ward concerned. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Government announces whole-school resumption of half-day face-to-face class arrangements

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (May 11) announced whole-school resumption of half-day face-to-face class arrangements for all kindergartens (KGs) as well as primary and secondary schools with effect from May 24 (Monday).

A spokesman for the EDB said, "The EDB, taking into account the latest developments of the pandemic, advice of health experts and preparedness of schools, has decided that after the completion of the 2021 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, all KGs, primary and secondary schools (including special schools and schools offering a non-local curriculum) as well as private schools offering a non-formal curriculum (commonly known as "tutorial schools") may fully resume face-to-face classes. The classes will be on a half-day basis with effect from May 24 (Monday) to avoid students eating out for lunch.

The spokesman continued, "For secondary schools, schools can arrange for all students to attend face-to-face classes or take examinations either in the morning or in the afternoon for no more than a half day, and that they should not arrange for students to attend face-to-face classes for a whole day. For primary schools, schools can arrange for all students to attend face-to-face classes or take examinations in the morning only, for no more than a half day. For KGs, those operating morning sessions/afternoon sessions can arrange for students to return to school for half-day lessons in the morning/afternoon respectively. KGs operating whole-day sessions can arrange

for students to attend face-to-face classes either in the morning or in the afternoon for no more than a half day. The EDB will issue a letter to inform schools of the detailed arrangements.

"The EDB is thankful to schools for putting in place the epidemic preventative measures properly. Following the Government's launch of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, the EDB encourages teachers and staff of schools to get vaccinated so as to protect the health of themselves, staff and students of schools as well as the community, and help all to return to normal life early. Moreover, we encourage teachers and staff of schools to take regular virus tests so as to create a safer learning environment for students."

The EDB reminds schools to get well prepared for whole-school resumption of half-day face-to-face classes and implement all the required anti-epidemic measures as stipulated in the earlier updated "Health Protection Measures for Schools" issued by the EDB and the "Health Advice to Schools for the Prevention of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)" issued by the Centre for Health Protection. Meanwhile, parents should continue taking precautionary measures for COVID-19 as well as pay close attention to the health conditions of their children. They should avoid taking their children to crowded places with poor ventilation. Students should maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and take adequate rest in order to strengthen their immunity. If students are feeling unwell (even if the symptoms are very mild), they should seek medical advice promptly to receive an appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

[Woman sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order](#)

A 38-year-old woman was sentenced to immediate imprisonment for 20 days by the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (May 11) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C).

The woman was earlier issued a compulsory quarantine order stating that she must conduct quarantine at home for 14 days. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, she had left the place of quarantine and taken off her wristband on September 28, 2020, without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer. She was charged with two counts of contravening sections 8(1), 8(4) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for 20 days for each of the two charges, with the sentences to run concurrently.

Breaching a quarantine order is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months. A

spokesman for the Department of Health said the sentencing sends a clear message to the community that breaching a compulsory quarantine order is a criminal offence that the Government will not tolerate, and solemnly reminded the public to comply with the regulations. As of today, a total of 135 persons have been convicted by the courts for breaching compulsory quarantine orders and have received sentences including immediate imprisonment for up to 14 weeks or a fine of up to \$15,000. The spokesman reiterated that resolute actions will be taken against anyone who has breached the relevant regulations.