

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*.