

CHP investigates cluster of Carbapenem Resistant Acinetobacter at elderly home in Sheung Shui

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 27) investigating a cluster of Carbapenem Resistant Acinetobacter (CRA) involving four residents of a residential care home for the elderly (RCHE) in Sheung Shui, and reminded members of the public of the proper use of antimicrobials and maintaining personal hygiene against the disease.

The cluster involves two male residents and two female residents aged 79 to 95. They were admitted to public hospitals for their underlying illnesses during the period between June 15 and September 1. Their pooled swabs taken on admission screening tested positive for CRA upon laboratory testing. All of them remain asymptomatic and are in stable condition. They have been discharged.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit and advised the RCHE to adopt necessary infection control measures. The RCHE has been put under medical surveillance. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

RCHEs are reminded to follow the [Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly](#) on detection, prevention and control of infections. If there is a suspicion of an infectious disease outbreak, the institution should report to the CHP promptly for follow-up.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Acinetobacter baumannii is commonly found in water and soil. It can also be found in the skin of healthy persons and it mostly affects patients with underlying illnesses. It may cause pneumonia, sepsis, endocarditis, meningitis or wound infections. CRA is an example of the multi-drug resistant organisms (MDROs), which is resistant to multiple antibiotics, limiting therapeutic options, and may render severe clinical infections difficult to treat. The range of diseases associated with CRA varies from asymptomatic carriage to potentially life-threatening or fatal infections. The level of risk depends on which part of the body is affected by the infection and the general health of the patient."

â€‹The spokesman said that proper use of antibiotics and maintaining good personal and environmental hygiene, especially hand hygiene, are important for the prevention of emergence and cross-transmission of MDROs like CRA. In addition, susceptible individuals such as the elderly, infants and young children, pregnant women and people with weakened immunity can lower the risk of contracting MDROs by not eating raw or undercooked foods.