

CHP investigates cluster of Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae at elderly home in Sham Shui Po

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 21) investigating a cluster of Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) at a residential care home for the elderly (RCHE) in Sham Shui Po, and reminded the public on maintaining strict personal and environmental hygiene, and proper use of antibiotics.

The cluster involves two female residents aged 48 and 63. The 48-year-old resident was admitted to a public hospital for fever on December 11 and her rectal swab taken on admission screening tested positive for CPE. The rectal swab of the 63-year-old resident taken by visiting medical practitioner on December 14 tested positive for CPE. Both of them remain asymptomatic of CPE 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 against CPE, including maintaining good environmental hygiene and hand hygiene for staff and residents. 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 suspicion of an infectious disease outbreak, the institution should report to the CHP promptly for follow-up.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Enterobacteriaceae (for example, E. coli and Klebsiella) are common pathogens that can cause infections at different body sites including urinary tract infections, intra-abdominal infections or bacteraemia. CPE are enterobacteriaceae that produce carbapenemase – an enzyme that can deactivate carbapenems and other beta-lactam antibiotics such as penicillins. These bacteria are commonly resistant to multiple antibiotics, limiting therapeutic options, and may render severe clinical infections difficult to treat. The range of diseases associated with CPE 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."

The spokesman added 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 multi-drug resistant organisms (MDROs) like CPE. 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.