

CHP investigates one additional confirmed melioidosis infection case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (November 9) said that one new confirmed melioidosis infection case had been confirmed by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB).

The additional case involves a 51-year-old male with hypertension living in Lam Tin. He developed fever and urinary discomfort since October 22. He attended St Teresa's Hospital on November 1 and was admitted on the same day. His clinical diagnosis was urinary tract infection and his current condition is stable. His prostatic abscess sample was confirmed positive for *Burkholderia pseudomallei* by the PHLSB today.

According to the epidemiological investigation by the CHP, the patient had not visited Sham Shui Po prior to his onset, nor has he drunk unboiled water. Epidemiological investigation of the case is ongoing.

As of today, a total of 35 melioidosis cases have been recorded this year in Hong Kong.

Also, the CHP continues to follow up on the environmental investigations with regard to cases recorded in Sham Shui Po earlier, and the testing of the environmental samples is still ongoing.

To enhance surveillance against melioidosis cases, the CHP has been working closely with the Hospital Authority, and has reminded doctors in Hong Kong to enhance vigilance on suspected cases and promptly refer patients (especially those with chronic illnesses) to hospitals for treatment, and report to the CHP according to the test result for the bacteria.

A spokesman for the CHP reiterated that person-to-person transmission and animal-to-human transmission are rare, but *Melioidosis* bacteria can survive in the local environment. *Melioidosis* is an endemic disease in Hong Kong and melioidosis cases have been recorded in Hong Kong each year. According to literature, infection cases are more common after typhoons or storms. The bacterium *Burkholderia pseudomallei* of melioidosis in soil and muddy water may become exposed to the ground after typhoons or storms, and the bacteria could spread more easily with strong winds or storms. As such, the number of melioidosis cases may increase.

The CHP appealed to members of the public to seek medical advice if they develop symptoms, in particular people with diabetes or other immunocompromised conditions, in order to receive appropriate medical diagnosis and treatment. The CHP will continue to deliver health messages to the local community and the general public via various channels. For more information on melioidosis, please visit the website of the CHP at www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/24/101110.html.