

CHP investigates outbreak of Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae at elderly home in Southern District

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 6) investigating an outbreak of Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE) at a residential care home for the elderly (RCHE) in Southern District, and reminded the public on maintaining strict personal and environmental hygiene and proper use of antibiotics.

The outbreak involves one male and two female residents aged 82 to 97 with underlying illnesses. The rectal swabs of the three patients were tested positive for CPE upon laboratory testing and confirmed to be asymptomatic carriers of CPE since October 22.

One patient has been admitted to Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Fung Yiu King Hospital for underlying illness unrelated to CPE. All patients have been in a stable condition.

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](#) on preventive and control measures as well as management of outbreaks, which should be reported to the CHP for prompt follow-up.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Enterobacteriaceae (for example, E. coli, 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 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 CPE.