

CHP investigates suspected cases of hepatotoxicity after consumption of sky fruit seeds and related products

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (February 26) investigating 30 suspected cases of hepatotoxicity following the consumption of mahogany (commonly known as sky fruit) seeds or related products, and appealed to members of the public to be cautious of the potential risk of adverse effects on the liver from consumption.

Upon notification by the Hospital Authority (HA), the CHP immediately commenced epidemiological investigation which revealed that 30 cases have been recorded by the HA since 2014 involving a total of 15 men and 15 women aged 45 to 84. Among them, 24 consumed the raw seeds while the rest consumed related products in the form of capsules.

Some patients developed symptoms including jaundice, tea colour urine, abdominal pain/dyspepsia and dizziness/syncope from a few days to about a year after the consumption. However, some remained asymptomatic and were found to have deranged liver function test incidentally. All patients have been in a stable condition. They have either recovered or are recovering after stopping the consumption.

Seeds of sky fruit are traditionally used in Southeast Asian countries for treating various illnesses such as control of blood sugar and high blood pressure. According to available medical literature and information from overseas health authorities, some cases with adverse effects on the liver with varying severity of liver cell damage were reported after consumption of sky fruit seeds but the exact mechanism of the adverse effect is unknown.

"Although there is currently no scientific data on the direct risk of liver injury related to the intake of sky fruit seeds or related products, members of the public are urged to be aware of the potential risk of adverse effects on the liver from the consumption," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"The public is advised to exercise caution and consult their doctors before consuming sky fruit seeds or related products. Those who feel unwell after consumption should consult their doctors immediately, in particular if symptoms of liver injury such as nausea, loss of appetite, lethargy, tea colour urine, or yellow colour in the whites of the eyes or the skin are developed," the spokesman reminded.

Investigations by the CHP are still continuing.

The CHP will issue letters to doctors today to alert them of the potential risk of adverse effects on the liver in consuming sky fruit seeds or related products, and encourage them to inform the CHP of any similar case encountered during clinical consultation.