

# DH investigates suspected poisoning cases relating to oral product "Hemohim" (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (November 1) appealed to members of the public not to buy or consume an oral product allegedly named "Hemohim" as it was found to contain an undeclared poisonous ingredient that may lead to liver injury.

The DH was notified by the Hospital Authority (HA) on October 29 of four suspected cases of poisoning presented with acute liver injury which involved four females aged 42 to 72 years old. All of them presented with symptoms including tea-coloured urine, jaundice and vomiting between April and September this year. All required admission and had been discharged from hospitals.

All of the patients reported consumption of the product concerned for health improvement purpose. The duration of intake of the product ranged from about two weeks to six months.

The DH collected two samples from the patients and the Government Laboratory today confirmed the presence of methoxsalen in all samples collected.

A DH spokesman said methoxsalen is considered a probable cause of liver injury. Other common side effects include nausea, headache, dizziness, fatigue, depression and skin reaction to sunlight.

Methoxsalen is a substance listed under the Pharmacy and Poison Regulations (Cap 138A) and can be used to treat diseases such as psoriasis and vitiligo. DH is investigating the source of the product and will take enforcement action when necessary.

Members of the public should stop consuming the product immediately so as to avoid adverse health effect. Those who have consumed the product should consult their doctor if they develop symptoms, the spokesman urged.

The DH has set up a hotline (2961 8949) which will operate during weekdays between 9am and 5pm from tomorrow (November 2) to answer public enquiries related to the possible adverse effects of the product.

