

## DH takes action to combat illegal sale or possession of unregistered medicines in medicine shops (with photos)

The Department of Health (DH) took action yesterday (February 21) and today (February 22) to combat illegal sale or possession of unregistered medicines in medicine shops and seized two unregistered medicines.

Acting upon intelligence, the DH raided medicine shops in different districts. During the operation, the DH seized two types of unregistered medicines, namely Yiling Lianhua Qingwen Jiaonang and Lotus Qingwen Capsules. Investigations are ongoing.

"The use of unregistered medicines may pose threats to public health as their safety, quality and efficacy are not proven. So far, no related adverse reports have been received. All registered proprietary Chinese medicines (pCm) should carry a Hong Kong registration number on the label in the format of 'HKC-XXXXX' or 'HKP-XXXXX'. All registered pharmaceutical products should also carry a Hong Kong registration number on the package in the format of 'HK-XXXXX'," a spokesman for the DH said.

According to the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap. 549), no person shall sell, import or possess any pCm unless it is registered. The Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap 138) also stipulates that all pharmaceutical products must be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be legally sold in the market. Illegal sale or possession of unregistered pharmaceutical products or pCm are criminal offences. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment. Upon completion of its investigations, the DH will seek advice from the Department of Justice on prosecution matters and will also refer the relevant case to the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong and the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong for consideration of possible disciplinary action. The DH would refer the relevant cases to other enforcement agencies to follow-up where necessary.

Members of the public who have purchased the concerned unregistered medicines should stop using them. The public should consult healthcare professionals if in doubt or feeling unwell after use, and should not self-medicate without seeking medical advice. They may submit the unregistered medicines to the DH's Chinese Medicine Regulatory Office at 16/F, AIA Kowloon Tower, Landmark East, 100 How Ming Street, Kwun Tong, during office hours for disposal.

