

Hospital Authority response on hepatitis E outbreak incident

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

In response to media enquiries, the Hospital Authority (HA) spokesperson today (August 28) responded as follows:

The HA expressed its concern on the findings of the Microbiology Department of the University of Hong Kong yesterday (August 27) regarding the possible transmission of hepatitis E from a deceased donor, and will establish an expert group to review the findings with a view to further enhancing the safety of organ transplant services and the care of transplant patients.

The expert group, comprising microbiologists, hepatologists, organ transplant and infection disease experts, will assess the effectiveness and feasibility of introducing screening of hepatitis E in organ donors. While the known risk of acquiring infectious diseases during organ transplant can never be completely eliminated, the expert group will consider the protocol of post-transplant clinical management of organ recipients if hepatitis E infection is identified in an asymptomatic organ donor.

Meanwhile, the four recipients of the heart, liver and two kidneys have been informed of the latest findings and appropriate antiviral treatment have commenced. The hospitals concerned will closely monitor the condition of the four patients who are currently in a stable condition. Three of them have already discharged. The case of the deceased lung recipient will be referred to the coroner for further follow-up.

The HA would also like to thank the organ donor again for her contribution and has informed her family on the latest findings.