

Hospital Authority suspends use of two external medical gels

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Following the previous detection of Burkholderia cepacia complex in a medical gel for external use, the Hospital Authority (HA) has detected another brand of medical gel containing the bacteria concerned. All public hospitals have subsequently been informed to suspend use of the two brands of medical gel.

The HA spokesperson said the medical gels were mainly used in ultrasound examination procedures. Upon receiving a report from Queen Mary Hospital (QMH) last week that Burkholderia cepacia complex was detected in the blood specimen of a patient who had used the medical gel concerned, the HA Central Committee on Infectious Diseases and Emergency Response held an ad hoc meeting and informed healthcare workers to suspend use of the product concerned immediately. The HA also proactively collected and tested medical gel samples from public hospitals. A sample of a medical gel was then confirmed as containing Burkholderia cepacia complex in testing. The HA today (November 25) informed all public hospitals to suspend use of the two brands of medical gel and arranged for available alternatives from other manufacturers. No HA service has been affected.

Including the previous case reported by QMH, a total of four patient blood specimens have been found containing Burkholderia cepacia complex, of which two were from QMH and the others were from Tuen Mun Hospital. Following review by microbiologists, all cases except for that of the QMH patient, which was confirmed as a clinical infection case, were classified as specimen contamination. The clinical conditions and treatment of all patients were unaffected.

"The HA has reported the situation to the Department of Health and will continue follow up with the updated situation with the DH and the manufacturer," the HA spokesperson added.