

Man arrested for suspected illegal sale of unregistered pharmaceutical product with undeclared drug ingredient (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (November 10) conducted an operation against the sale of an unregistered pharmaceutical product, namely Neo Hair Lotion, which was found to contain an undeclared drug ingredient. During the operation, a 40-year-old man was arrested by the Police for suspected illegal sale and possession of an unregistered pharmaceutical product and a Part 1 poison.

During the DH's market surveillance, a sample of the above product was purchased via the Internet for analysis. Test results from the Government Laboratory revealed that the sample contained minoxidil.

Minoxidil is a Part 1 poison under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138). It can only be sold at pharmacies under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. Minoxidil is commonly used for the treatment of hair loss, with side effects including scalp irritation and itchiness.

According to the Ordinance, 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 Part 1 poisons are criminal offences. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The DH's investigation is continuing and advice will be sought from the Department of Justice on prosecution matters upon completion of the investigation.

The DH spokesman strongly urged members of the public not to buy products of unknown or doubtful composition, or to consume products from unknown sources, as the safety, efficacy and quality of these products are not guaranteed. All registered pharmaceutical products carry a Hong Kong registration number on the label in the format of HK-XXXXX.

People who have purchased the above product should stop using it and consult healthcare professionals for advice if in doubt or feeling unwell after use. They can submit the above product to the DH's Drug Office at Room 1801, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, during office hours for disposal.

