

## Man arrested for suspected illegal sale of unregistered pharmaceutical products (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (January 17) conducted an operation against the sale of unregistered pharmaceutical products, during which a 31-year-old man was arrested by the Police for suspected illegal sale of unregistered pharmaceutical products and Part 1 poisons.

â€‹ Acting upon a public complaint, some pharmaceutical products for slimming and muscle pain were found offered for sale via a social media platform and the Internet. The products are labelled in Japanese and do not bear Hong Kong pharmaceutical product registration numbers.

â€‹ The products for slimming are believed to contain frusemide, rosuvastatin or levothyroxine while the product for muscle pain is believed to contain felbinac. The above ingredients are all Part 1 poisons under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap 138).

â€‹ Frusemide is a diuretic and its side effects include low blood pressure and electrolyte imbalance. Rosuvastatin is used for the treatment of hypercholesterolemia and its side effects include muscle pain and headache. Levothyroxine is used for the treatment of hypothyroidism and its side effects include fast and irregular heart beat and hypertension. Felbinac is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug used topically to relieve pain. Inappropriate use of felbinac may cause erythema and dermatitis.

â€‹ Products containing the above ingredients should only be used upon the advice of a medical practitioner and be supplied by a pharmacy under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. Products containing frusemide, rosuvastatin or levothyroxine are also prescription medicines.

â€‹ 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 Part 1 poisons and unregistered pharmaceutical products are criminal offences. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

â€‹ The DH's investigation is ongoing.

â€‹ 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. All registered pharmaceutical products carry a Hong Kong registration number on the package in the format HK-XXXXX. Safety, quality and efficacy of unregistered pharmaceutical products are not guaranteed.

â€‹ Weight control should be achieved through a balanced diet and

appropriate exercise. The public should consult healthcare professionals before using any medication for weight control. The public may visit the website of the Drug Office of the DH for [health messages on weight control and slimming products](#) and [information on slimming products with undeclared Western drug ingredients](#).

People who have purchased the above products should stop using them and consult healthcare professionals for advice if they are in doubt or feeling unwell after use. They can submit the products to the DH's Drug Office at Room 1856, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, during office hours for disposal.

