

NTWC announces incident of use of expired disinfectant

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for New Territories West Cluster (NTWC) made the following announcement today (February 27) regarding an incident of using expired activator foam for endoscope disinfection:

On February 25, the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department of Tuen Mun Hospital received a report by staff on an incident in which a bottle of expired activator foam was used for endoscope disinfection. NTWC immediately inspected all of the activator foam in the three A&E Departments and found that the same batch of expired foam was used for nasopharyngoscopy endoscope disinfection in both Tuen Mun Hospital and Pok Oi Hospital.

Nasopharyngoscopy is a procedure used to assess airway obstruction in patients. The disinfection of an endoscope involves three steps and the activator foam is used in the second step. The shelf life of the foam is two years and the best-used-by date of the batch concerned was September 30, 2019.

According to the records, 20 patients have undergone nasopharyngoscopy with endoscopes using the affected disinfectant since October 1, 2019.

According to the expert opinion of a microbiologist, the risk of transmitting infection is low. While three patients had succumbed due to their underlying illnesses, the hospitals will contact the remaining 17 patients to arrange health assessment as a precautionary measure.

NTWC apologises to all patients affected and the public, and is very concerned about the incident. A stock-taking exercise has been conducted at the A&E Departments to ensure products in use are within their shelf life. The hospitals have also reminded staff to stay vigilant on medical product safety in order to avoid the recurrence of similar incidents.

NTWC has reported the incident to the Hospital Authority Head Office via the Advance Incident Reporting System.