

Public urged not to buy or consume unlabelled slimming products with controlled ingredients (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (February 25) appealed to the public not to buy or consume unlabelled slimming products that may contain controlled medicine ingredients and might be dangerous to health.

Acting upon intelligence, it was found that someone was offering for sale via a social media platform various unlabelled slimming products claiming to be imported from overseas. Samples of the above products were purchased for analysis and the test results from the Government Laboratory revealed that the samples contained ephedrine, fluoxetine, hydrochlorothiazide and topiramate, which are Part 1 poisons under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138).

During a joint operation conducted with the Police today, a 27-year-old man was arrested by the Police for illegal possession of Part 1 poisons and unregistered pharmaceutical products. The DH's investigation is continuing.

Ephedrine is usually used for the treatment of nasal congestion and its side effects include anxiety, headache, insomnia and nausea. Hydrochlorothiazide is used for the treatment of hypertension and its side effects include low blood pressure and electrolyte imbalance. Fluoxetine is used for treatment of mood disorder and may cause hallucination and insomnia. Topiramate is used for treatment of seizures and prophylaxis of migraines and may cause cognitive-related dysfunction, and neuropsychiatric abnormalities.

According to the Pharmacy and Poisons 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 spokesman strongly urged members of the public not to buy products of unknown or doubtful composition, or to consume products from unknown sources. Members of the public who have purchased the above products should stop consuming them immediately. They should consult healthcare professionals for advice if feeling unwell after consumption.

The spokesman added that 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. They may visit the website of the Drug Office of the DH for "[Health message on overweight problem and slimming products](#)" and "[Information on slimming products with undeclared Western drug ingredients](#)" for more information.

The public may submit the products to the Drug Office of the DH at Room 1801, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, during office hours for disposal.

