

Public urged not to buy or use topical product containing undeclared controlled drug ingredients (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (August 15) appealed to the public not to buy or use a topical product (labelled as "å»-å°·çŽ<è%æe-ä¹³è†0" with no English name), as it was found to contain undeclared controlled drug ingredients.

Acting upon a case referred by the Hospital Authority, the DH earlier purchased a sample of the above product from a premises in Lai Chi Kok for analysis. Test results from the Government Laboratory revealed that the product sample contained clobetasol propionate, miconazole and terbinafine, which are Part 1 poisons under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138). The product is also suspected to be an unregistered pharmaceutical product.

The DH today conducted an operation with the Police against the above premises. During the operation, one woman aged 57 years was arrested by the Police for suspected illegal sale and possession of Part 1 poison and unregistered pharmaceutical product. The DH's investigation is continuing.

Clobetasol propionate is a steroid substance for treating inflammation. Inappropriate application of steroids could cause skin problems and systemic side effects such as moon face, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, adrenal insufficiency and osteoporosis. Products containing clobetasol propionate are prescription medicines that should be used under a doctor's directions and be supplied in a pharmacy under the supervision of a registered pharmacist upon a doctor's prescription. Miconazole and terbinafine are used for the treatment of fungal infections with side effects including local irritation and sensitivity reactions.

According to the Ordinance, all pharmaceutical products must be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be 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 or use products of doubtful composition or from unknown sources. All registered pharmaceutical products should carry a Hong Kong registration number on the package in the format of "HK-XXXXX". The safety, quality and efficacy of unregistered pharmaceutical products are not guaranteed.

People who have purchased the product concerned should stop using it

immediately and consult healthcare professionals if in doubt or feeling unwell after use. They may submit the product 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.

