

Renal units and patients alerted on unusual infection identified in renal patients

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (September 18) advised peritoneal dialysis patients to be cautious with the use of antiseptics for wound care at home, following a notification from Queen Mary Hospital (QMH) yesterday (September 17) on an outbreak of Burkholderia cepacia complex infection of renal dialysis patients.

The HA spokesperson said that QMH identified Burkholderia cepacia complex from the clinical specimens collected from the catheter exit site of four peritoneal dialysis patients on September 6. An environmental surveillance was initiated immediately to ascertain whether there was a common source of infection.

"The environmental surveillance confirmed that the two brands of chlorhexidine antiseptic currently used by the public hospitals and clinics were negative for the bacteria, while the prepacked aqueous chlorhexidine, sampled from the community pharmacies and healthcare product shops in some hospitals, had tested positive for Burkholderia cepacia complex."

Prepacked aqueous chlorhexidine is used by some peritoneal dialysis patients for skin disinfection and catheter exit site care at home, and can be purchased over-the-counter in community pharmacies and healthcare product shops.

"A retrospective review of peritoneal dialysis patients by QMH found that 53 patients have Burkholderia cepacia complex infection in the last two years, including five cases of invasive infections. There is currently no evidence that any of the patients died of the infection."

The HA spokesperson said that the HA Central Renal Committee had issued an alert to all renal units on the incident and patients would be reminded to follow the instructions from respective renal units on catheter exit site care at home.

"The HA will review the laboratory results of renal patients with Burkholderia cepacia complex infection in all public hospitals in due course, while patients are advised to seek medical advice if wound infection is suspected. Healthcare product shops in public hospitals have also been informed of the incident and to suspend selling the antiseptic concerned.

"The findings by QMH have been reported to the Department of Health for follow up and we will co-operate with DH on the epidemiological investigation

if needed," the spokesperson added.