

[AFCD announces new quarantine arrangements for imported cats and dogs](#)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) announced today (November 26) that new quarantine arrangements for imported cats and dogs will be implemented starting from December 1. The AFCD will introduce Group IIIA for exporting countries/places, thereby increasing the number of groups from three to four. The quarantine period for cats and dogs imported from Group IIIA countries/places will be significantly shortened from the current 120 days to 30 days upon their arrival in Hong Kong, provided that they meet the relevant quarantine requirements. The Macao Special Administrative Region is the first place to be included in Group IIIA. The AFCD is currently discussing with Mainland authorities the implementation details of including the Mainland in Group IIIA. Announcements will be made in due course.

Applicants for importing cats and dogs from Group IIIA countries/places should ensure that the requirements are met and provide relevant proof to the AFCD, including that the animals must be implanted with a conforming microchip, accompanied by valid vaccination certificates against rabies and other specified infectious diseases, have a satisfactory rabies neutralising antibody titre test result from a laboratory recognised by the AFCD, and an animal health certificate issued or endorsed by a government veterinary officer of the country/place of export. Details about the new quarantine arrangements and the application procedure for importing cats and dogs, including the reservation of quarantine facilities and information on the recognised laboratories, are available on the AFCD website: www.afcd.gov.hk/english/quarantine/qua_ie/qua_ie_ipab/qua_ie_ipab_idc/qua_ie_ipab_idc_Group_IIIa.html.

An AFCD spokesman noted that as biotechnology has developed in recent years, the AFCD has conducted a risk assessment earlier on and considered that the quarantine period for cats and dogs imported from certain Group III places could be shortened by measures such as rabies vaccination and rabies neutralising antibody titre tests. The new arrangement aims to optimise the quarantine requirements for importing cats and dogs, helping pet owners bring cats and dogs to Hong Kong.

Under the new arrangement, the AFCD will approach countries/places that do not meet the requirements to be included in Group II but have satisfactory regulation of veterinary services and official controls on health certification for quarantine arrangements. Upon reaching agreements, these countries/places will be categorised as Group IIIA to shorten the quarantine period for importing cats and dogs upon their arrival in Hong Kong. The original Group III will be renamed as Group IIIB. Since the incubation period of rabies can be up to several months, the quarantine period for importing cats and dogs from Group IIIB countries/places will remain no less than 120

days.

To effectively prevent the transmission of rabies into Hong Kong, the AFCD classifies places into different groups according to different risks of rabies, with reference to information about the surveillance of animal diseases from the World Organisation for Animal Health. Group I includes rabies-free places (i.e. where rabies has been absent for a long time); Group II includes places where rabies cases are few and under effective control; Group IIIA includes places that do not meet the requirements to be included in Group II but have satisfactory regulation of veterinary services and official controls on health certification; and Group IIIB includes places where rabies cases are reported and not under effective control. In general, places that do not meet the requirements of Group I, II or IIIA (or cannot be assessed) will be included in Group IIIB.

[Health Bureau organises Health Research Symposium to showcase achievements of advancing health through research and technology \(with photos\)](#)

The Health Research Symposium, organised by the Health Bureau, was held today (November 26). The Symposium attracted enrolment from over 850 medical and healthcare practitioners, researchers, academics, and community and government representatives to share the research findings of projects funded by the Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF) as well as to exchange experiences.

With this year's theme set on "Advancing Health through Research and Technology", the Symposium provided a networking platform for healthcare experts and relevant personnel to share knowledge and achievements in promoting excellence in health and medical research. Four world-renowned experts, namely Professor Anthony Jorm, Dr Alexander Ng, Professor Chen Zhengming and Professor Corinne Faivre-Finn, were invited to deliver keynote lectures at the Symposium to enlighten the attendees with their experiences and insights on mental health, the application of big data in primary healthcare, precision medicine, and real-world research, respectively.

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, and the Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, attended the opening ceremony of the Symposium. Professor Lo said, "The Government has been striving to promote and encourage the translation of medical and health research by researchers

and the healthcare sector by funding and supporting medical and health research as well as training through the HMRF, with a view to benefitting citizens' well-being and advancing medical innovation development. Since the establishment of the HMRF in 2011, the Government has committed over \$4 billion and funded over 2 000 investigator-initiated research projects, more than 90 research fellowship awards, and close to 300 commissioned studies.

"The HMRF attaches great importance to the translation of research findings of funded projects with a view to facilitating the formulation of healthcare policies, strengthening the healthcare system and boosting the standard and quality of healthcare services, thereby attaining the goal of enhancing public health. I am pleased to see that many HMRF-funded projects have provided researchers with effective support for them to create new knowledge in the healthcare field and yielded fruitful results in translating research into evidence-based application, with significant contribution to promoting citizens' health. I call for local researchers to continue to make good use of the HMRF to accelerate the translation of research results, unleash new quality productive forces in medical innovation, and push forward Hong Kong's development into an international health and medical innovation hub."

According to the surveys conducted by the Government on 145 HMRF-funded projects and with technology/knowledge transfer offices of universities this year, 78 per cent of the funded projects had their research findings published in peer-reviewed journals, creating new knowledge in the biomedical field; whereas 42 per cent of the funded projects received additional funding for further research, with each project receiving an additional funding amounting to five times that of the HMRF grant on average. In terms of progress towards industrialisation, the HMRF-funded projects have filed 162 patent applications in different places (including the Mainland, Hong Kong, Europe, the United States and Japan), established 15 spin-out companies/joint ventures/incubation programmes, and signed 11 collaboration agreements of various types. Moreover, some HMRF-funded studies have brought positive impact on the formulation of healthcare policies and practices in areas such as infectious diseases and cancer treatment.

To recognise the excellent research efforts and outstanding contributions of researchers in the areas of medical and health, health promotion and COVID-19, awards were presented to 13 researchers at the Symposium today. The awardees are listed as below:

Excellent Research Awards

Professor Richard Choy Kwong-wai
Professor Han Quanbin
Professor Margaret Ip
Professor Cindy Lam Lo-kuen
Professor Simon Ng Siu-man

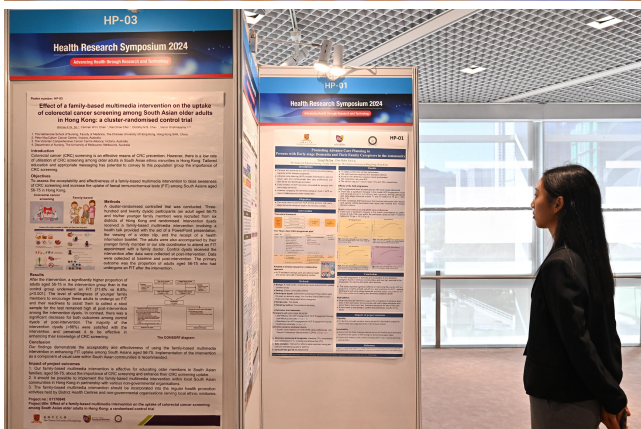
The Most Promising Young Researcher Awards

Dr Shara Lee Wee-yee
Professor Wang Zixin

Excellent Health Promotion Project Award
Professor Winnie Mak Wing-sze

Outstanding Project Team on COVID-19 Research Awards
Professor Francis Chan Ka-leung
Professor Philip Li Hei
Professor Leo Poon Lit-man
Professor Yuen Kwok-yung
Professor Zhang Tong

At the Symposium today, 28 local project teams funded by the HMRF and four recipients of the Research Fellowship Scheme were invited to share their research findings and translation results, covering research in areas including advanced medical technologies, primary healthcare and preventive medicine, non-communicable diseases, mental health and infectious diseases. Nearly 80 HMRF-funded projects were also displayed at a poster exhibition at the Symposium to showcase the achievements.



Proprietor fined for violation of safety legislation

Yau Sang Galvanizing (Hot-Dip) Company Limited was fined \$195,000 at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (November 26) for violations of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance and the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Lifting Appliances and Lifting Gear) Regulations. The prosecutions were launched by the Labour Department.

The case involved a fatal accident that occurred on December 28, 2023, in a factory in Yuen Long. A crane in operation collided with another crane that was being used to suspend a metal block. The metal block moved and struck a worker who was carrying out welding work. The worker sustained serious injuries and passed away 22 days later.

Update on Postal services to Canada

Hongkong Post announced today (November 26) that, as advised by the postal administration of Canada, due to a postal workers' strike, mail is being held at Canada Post and is not being processed until the end of the strike action. As a result, mail delivery services to Canada are subject to significant delays. Hongkong Post will monitor the situation and make adjustments as necessary. Members of the public are advised to check for the latest announcements from Canada and the Hongkong Post website (www.hongkongpost.hk) for any updates.

Ombudsman probes illegal disposal problem and “HoHoSkips” recycling service for construction waste (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Mr Jack Chan, today (26 November) announced the launch of a direct investigation operation to examine the Government's recycling service for construction waste and enforcement against illegal disposal of construction waste.

Renovation works for domestic, commercial, catering and office premises generate significant amounts of construction waste. According to the report "Monitoring of Solid Waste in Hong Kong" for 2022 published by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), the daily quantity of construction waste generated that year was around 50,000 tonnes. The Government encourages construction waste producers, such as building contractors, renovation contractors, renovation workers or persons-in-charge, to reduce waste or carry out sorting for reuse or recycling, thereby saving costs and minimising the intake at landfills. Under the Construction Waste Disposal Charging Scheme implemented since 2005, construction waste producers are required to pay for waste disposal and have a duty to dispose of waste properly.

To facilitate the proper disposal of construction waste generated from small-scale renovation works by the public and small-to medium-sized renovators, the EPD launched a pilot scheme in February 2021 for the collection and recycling of construction waste at the district level. Subsidised by the Recycling Fund, the pilot scheme enables the public and the trade to make bookings via the mobile application "HoHoSkips" for the waste disposal service provided by recyclers.

Nevertheless, there have been media reports and public complaints from time to time about illegal disposal of construction waste in public places, especially on the roadside. This not only causes inconvenience and safety hazards for the public and road users but also affects environmental hygiene and requires additional public resources for disposal. The Office of The Ombudsman also notes that data suggests that the "HoHoSkips" service might have been underused.

Mr Chan said, "While the Construction Waste Disposal Charging Scheme has been implemented for nearly 20 years and the 'HoHoSkips' service for more than three years, illegally disposed construction waste is still frequently found on the roadside, causing environmental hygiene nuisance. Through this direct investigation operation, I aim to seriously examine whether there is any room for improvement in the management strategy for the recovery and reuse of construction waste, with a view to providing a clean and comfortable living environment for the public. It is incumbent upon the EPD to formulate practical measures to enable the public and the trade to dispose of construction waste legally and appropriately, and to increase recovery, reuse and recycling rates of construction waste. Therefore, I have decided to launch this direct investigation operation to scrutinise the existing management of construction waste, including the EPD's control and preventive measures against illegal disposal of construction waste, specific details and operating situations of the 'HoHoSkips' service, how its effectiveness is monitored, and relevant promotion and publicity initiatives. Where necessary, pertinent recommendations will be made for improvement."

The Ombudsman welcomes views from members of the public on this topic. Written submissions should reach the Office of The Ombudsman by December 27, 2024:

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Furthermore, the Office of The Ombudsman notes the community is concerned about roadside skips, which not only cause obstruction and affect the safety of road users but also impact the environment and hygiene. The Office will collect information on this topic. Where necessary, the Office will conduct a preliminary inquiry to consider any need for a direct investigation operation, thereby examining this issue in detail and making proper recommendations for improvement.

