

Woman arrested for suspected illegal sale of slimming product with undeclared banned drug ingredient (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (October 21) conducted an operation against the sale of a slimming product (no English name, see photo), which was found to contain an undeclared and banned drug ingredient. During the operation, a 46-year-old woman was arrested by the Police for the suspected illegal sale of a Part 1 poison and an unregistered pharmaceutical product.

Acting upon intelligence, a sample of the above suspected unregistered pharmaceutical product was purchased via a social media platform for analysis. Test results from the Government Laboratory revealed that the oral tablets included in the sample contained sibutramine, which is a banned ingredient. The DH's investigation is continuing.

Sibutramine is a Part 1 poison under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138) that was once used as an appetite suppressant. Since November 2010, pharmaceutical products containing sibutramine have been banned in Hong Kong because of an increased cardiovascular risk.

According to the 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 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 product should stop consuming it 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 messages on overweight problem and slimming products](#)" and "[Information on slimming products with undeclared Western drug ingredients](#)" for information.

The public may submit the above 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.

