

Woman convicted for practice of Chinese medicine without registration and possession of unregistered proprietary Chinese medicine

A woman aged 63 was convicted at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today (May 14) for practice of Chinese medicine without registration and possession of unregistered proprietary Chinese medicine (pCm). She was sentenced to two months' imprisonment, suspended for two years, and a fine of \$10,000 respectively.

The Police and the Department of Health (DH) conducted a joint operation and raided a moxibustion rehabilitation centre at Nan Fung Centre in Tsuen Wan on November 15, 2016. Investigations revealed that the woman provided moxibustion in the premises and a quantity of unregistered moxa sticks was also seized during the operation.

"The DH is very concerned about the potential health risks arising from non-professionals applying Chinese medicine-based treatment," a spokesman for the DH said.

"Moxibustion is regarded as one of the Chinese medicine therapies if traditional Chinese medicine theory is applied. It involves the stimulation of acupoints through burning moxa sticks. Through the effects of heat and medicine, it can regulate meridians and collaterals, and relieve pain. Improper use can lead to skin burns and infections. In addition, use of unregistered pCm may also pose threats to public health as the safety, quality and efficacy are not proven," the spokesman explained.

According to section 108 of the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap 549), any person who practises Chinese medicine while not being a registered Chinese medicine practitioner or listed Chinese medicine practitioner in Hong Kong commits a criminal offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of \$100,000 and to three years' imprisonment. In addition, according to section 119 of the Ordinance, no person shall sell, import or possess any pCm unless it is registered. The maximum penalty for each offence is \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

Members of the public should seek advice from a qualified healthcare professional when feeling sick, and should make a report to the Police if illegal Chinese medicine practice is suspected. In addition, a list of registered and listed Chinese medicine practitioners has been uploaded to the website of the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong (CMCHK) (www.cmchk.org.hk) for viewing. The public can also call the Secretariat of the CMCHK (Tel: 2121 1888) for related enquiries.