

Alert on Scorpio adverse event

The Department of Health (DH) has recently received a notification of an adverse event related to the consumption of Chinese medicines, Scorpio, which was prescribed by two registered Chinese medicine practitioners (CMP) of a Chinese medicine clinic in Wan Chai. The patient fully recovered after treatment in a hospital. Initial investigation by DH revealed that the likely contributing factor for this adverse event could be improper prescription of Scorpio by the CMP. No gross contamination of other Chinese medicines has been identified. According to the clinic's information, no other patient has been given with similar prescription.

Scorpio is a Chinese medicine containing neurological toxic peptide and is indicated for pain relief of muscle and nerve. The prescription should be started from low dosage. Prolonged decoction to reduce its toxicity is recommended before it can be consumed orally. On the other hand, the dosage of blended powder should be closely monitored. Scorpio is contraindicated in pregnancy. Its overdose can cause muscular spasm and limb numbness, respiratory suppression which could be fatal in severe case.

DH advises all CMP to draw reference to relevant recommended dosage of Pharmacopoeia of the People's Republic of China in prescription of Chinese medicine. Members of the public are also advised to follow CMP's instructions in the preparation and consumption of Chinese herbs. They should seek medical advice as soon as possible if there is any discomfort after taking the herbs.

The case was referred to the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong for following up any malpractice of CMP.

Chinese Medicine Division,

Department of Health

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