

## PREFACE

Chinese medicine has thousands of years of history and is commonly used in China and nearby countries. With the worldwide surging demand for the use of various traditional medicines in recent years, the development and regulation of traditional medicine has become a global challenge to various regulatory authorities.

In Hong Kong, Chinese medicines are widely accepted and trusted by the public. Chinese herbal medicines also played an important role in the international trade. According to the Census and Statistics Department, the value of imports and re-exports of Chinese herbal medicines amounted to \$2 billion and \$0.86 billion respectively in 2010.

Chinese materia medica (CMM) is the cornerstone in the practice and use of Chinese medicine. Establishing a set of standards for Chinese materia medica to enhance the quality and safety of CMM commonly used in Hong Kong is of paramount importance. Since 2002, the Department of Health (DH) has been working with other research institutions to conduct scientific research for the Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards (HKCMMS). So far, four editions of HKCMMS have been published by DH, covering a total of 90 CMM of herbal origin and 8 CMM of mineral origin. In this fifth edition, 42 CMM of herbal origin are covered. As some of these CMM are either seeds or contain volatile oils, we have specifically included the determination of acid value and content of volatile oils as quality indicators for such CMM in this edition.

Over these years, HKCMMS not only have enhanced the awareness of the Chinese medicine sector on the quality and safety of CMM, but also promoted the advancement on Chinese medicine research. The research findings are widely recognized by local and overseas institutions. As of today, the participating universities have already published more than 50 research papers based on HKCMMS project. I am glad to note that the project has created a platform for the universities to work collaboratively, synergised different expertise, and nurtured many young researchers.

This year also marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chinese Medicine Division (CMD) of the DH of the HKSAR. On the global dimension, the World Health Organization (WHO) has designated the CMD as the WHO Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine. This is the first collaborating centre to assist the WHO to formulate policies and strategies, and to harmonise regulatory standards for traditional medicine. The work on HKCMMS will contribute towards these goals.

Locally, in order to further enhance the capabilities of testing and certification of CMM, the Government has set up the Panel on Promoting Testing and Certification Services in Chinese Medicine Trade (hereinafter called “the Panel”) under the Hong Kong Council for Testing and Certification. The Panel has adopted

HKCMMS in its proficiency testing programme to determine the testing capabilities of the laboratories on assay and microscopic examination of CMM. In addition, the Hong Kong Accreditation Service has launched accreditation services for laboratories to authenticate CMM through microscopic examination and physiochemical approaches in accordance with the HKCMMS, and has published supplementary accreditation criteria for CMM. The implementation of HKCMMS has provided a reliable foundation for the testing industry and also facilitated the development of testing services of CMM.

The above achievements would not be possible without the excellent leadership of the International Advisory Board (hereinafter called “the Board”). I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Board. I am also grateful to the contributions made by the Government Laboratory of the HKSAR, as well as the research teams of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the City University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the University of Hong Kong. My indebtedness and appreciation also goes to the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the State Food and Drug Administration and the Chinese Pharmacopoeia Commission of the People’s Republic of China, for their invaluable advice on the development of HKCMMS and their permission to use the information in the Pharmacopoeia of the People’s Republic of China.

Dr Constance CHAN  
Director of Health  
December 2012

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Professor, Institute for Control of Chinese Traditional Medicine and  
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