

Alert on herbal medicine poisoning

The Department of Health (DH) has recently received notification of a suspected case of aconitum alkaloid poisoning relating to the consumption of Chinese medicine.

A patient obtained herbal pills from a Chinese medicine practitioner (CMP) in the Mainland via his relative. The ingredients and recommended dosage for the herbal pills were not known. The patient was subsequently admitted to a local public hospital after consumption of the herbal pills due to generalized numbness and low blood pressure, which is compatible with aconitum alkaloid poisoning. The patient was discharged home after treatment.

The Hospital Authority's laboratory results revealed aconitum alkaloids and strychnos alkaloids in the herbal pills. It appears that the likely contributing factor for this case is consumption of Chinese medicines containing aconitum alkaloids.

People may patronize CMP in the Mainland for health maintenance or treatment of illnesses. DH advises members of the public to consult reputable and qualified CMPs and purchase Chinese medicines from reliable retailers only. People should not recklessly purchase Chinese medicines or prepare formulation for any illness. Besides, they should obtain the prescription after each consultation. To protect your health, never consult unqualified CMP nor purchase any Chinese medicines from unknown sources.

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