

**Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board
PRESS RELEASE**

Financial Penalty and Censure of TCM Physician

Mr Koh Chin Aik (许振益) is a registered Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Physician and Acupuncturist with the TCM Practitioners Board. He practises at Specialist Traditional Chinese Medicine Centre, located at 333 Kreta Ayer Road, #01-12/13, Singapore 080333.

2 On 6 June 2017, a statutory complaint was filed by a Complainant against Mr Koh alleging professional negligence (the “**Complaint**”). The Complainant alleged, amongst other things, that Mr Koh caused burn injuries to him during an acupuncture moxibustion therapy (the “**Therapy**”). On the day of the incident (i.e. 13 May 2017), Mr Koh had applied acupuncture needles on the Complainant’s left calf and asked his assistant to ignite the moxa on the tips of the acupuncture needles. He then left the treatment room after instructing his assistant to watch over the Therapy. However, in the midst of the Therapy, Mr Koh called his assistant away to attend to another matter. The assistant complied and left the Complainant unattended. It was at this juncture that ashes from the moxa granules dropped onto the Complainant’s left calf and caused three burns.

3 Subsequent to reviewing the Written Explanation provided by Mr Koh, an Investigation Committee (IC) was convened in respect of the Complaint. Upon the conclusion of the inquiry hearing, the IC arrived at the following findings:

- (a) Mr Koh failed to exercise responsibility and appropriate care vis-à-vis the Complainant when administering and/or overseeing the Therapy on the Complainant.
- (b) Mr Koh failed to take adequate precautions when administering and/or overseeing the administration of the Therapy on the Complainant. This includes the failure to take adequate steps to prevent burns from occurring on the Complainant’s calf.
- (c) The aforesaid treatment that Mr Koh administered and/or oversaw on 13 May 2017 was not in accordance with the appropriate and generally accepted methods of TCM treatment as required by Clause 4.1.1(e) of the Ethical Code.
- (d) Mr Koh’s aforesaid management of the Complainant’s care amounted to professional negligence in breach of Section 19(i) of the TCM Practitioners Act (Cap. 333A) (the “**Act**”).

4 Notwithstanding the breaches committed by Mr Koh as detailed above, the Board took into consideration his conduct in respect of the Board's investigation, including the inquiry hearing. Amongst others, Mr Koh showed remorse for his conduct, admitted to his guilt promptly and was a first-time offender. The Board also acknowledged his contributions to the TCM community. Nevertheless, these mitigating factors did not negate the seriousness of his breaches.

5 Having carefully considered the foregoing, the Board decided to impose the following sanctions against Mr Koh pursuant to Section 19(2) of the Act:

(a) A financial penalty of \$3,000.00 and

(b) A censure.

6 Pursuant to Section 20(1) of the Act, the Board has also directed Mr Koh to pay all costs and expenses of and incidental to the inquiry conducted and action taken against him.

7 Based on the findings of the investigation conducted, the mishap could have been avoided had adequate care and safeguards been put in place. The Board would therefore urge all registered TCM practitioners to regularly review the adequacy of their practices to minimize the risk of burn incidents.

8 Registered TCM practitioners are also required to take full responsibility for the conduct of their assistants. These include closely supervising their assistants and ensuring that they are competent and adequately trained. The Board takes a serious view of any registered TCM practitioner taking the safety of patients lightly and would not hesitate to take appropriate disciplinary measures against any errant TCM practitioner.

TCM PRACTITIONERS BOARD 中医管理委员会
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