



## SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

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3 June 2010

### PRESS RELEASE

#### DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY FOR DR SOO ING CHOONG

1. A Disciplinary Committee (DC) inquiry was held against Dr Soo Ing Choong ("Dr Soo"), age 48 years, of Familycare Clinic and Surgery located at Block 85C Toa Payoh Lorong 4 #01-380 Singapore 313085 at the end of 2009. It was concluded in April this year.
2. Dr Soo faced 32 charges of professional misconduct for failing to exercise due care in the management of the patients with Subutex.
3. The charges included (a) failure to formulate and/or adhere to a management plan for the treatment of the patient's medical condition; (b) inappropriate prescribing practice by regularly prescribing Subutex to his patients without exercising an acceptable standard of diligence and care; (c) failure to properly record or document in the patients' medical records, sufficient details of the patients' diagnosis, symptoms, condition and/or any management plan to enable a proper assessment of the patient's medical condition during the period of treatment, and (d) inappropriately prescribing other medication with Subutex on various occasions.
4. The DC found that Dr Soo had inappropriately prescribed Subutex on an indefinite basis to his patients and that this was not an accepted medical practice. Dr. Soo also did not exercise an acceptable standard of diligence and care in relation to these patients who were prescribed Subutex on an indefinite basis. Dr. Soo had also failed to properly maintain the relevant patients' records as required of registered medical practitioners. The failure to maintain such proper medical records amounted to professional misconduct. In relation to Dr Soo's co-prescription of Subutex with other medications, the DC noted that there was a relatively low incidence of such co-prescription and therefore was not of sufficient gravity to amount to professional misconduct.

5. In making its decision, the DC also considered several mitigating factors, including the absence of a breach of the Ministry of Health's Guidelines dated 26 October 2005 which was a basis for the non-imposition of a sentence involving suspension, that there was no persistent practice by Dr. Soo to co-prescribe Subutex with other potentially addictive medicines, and that Dr. Soo had practised as a physician for about 15 years without any prior antecedents.
  
6. In the circumstances, taking the evidence and mitigating factors into consideration, the DC ordered that Dr Soo:
  - (a) be fined the sum of \$5,000;
  
  - (b) be censured;
  
  - (c) give a written undertaking to the Medical Council that he will not engage in the conduct complained of or any similar conduct; and
  
  - (d) pay the costs and expenses of and incidental to these inquiry proceedings.

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