



SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

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PRESS RELEASE

DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY FOR DR NG KWEI TEO

1. A Disciplinary Committee ("DC") inquiry ("Inquiry") was held for Dr Ng Kwei Teo ("Dr Ng"), of KT Ng Clinic located at Block 246 Hougang Street 22 #01- 157 Singapore 530246, on 19 July 2010.
2. Dr Ng pleaded guilty to 47 charges of failure to exercise due care in the management of his patients amounting to professional misconduct. The charges relate to the prescription of Subutex and / or Benzodiazepines.
3. The DC took note that the charges on Subutex concerned professional misconduct that was predominantly committed prior to the issuance of the 2005 Guidelines by the MOH. However, the DC took the view that even where there are no guidelines, such prescription ought to be made in accordance with the standards of the medical profession and good practice.
4. The DC also observed that that long-term consumption of hypnotics may lead to drug dependence and that the formulation of a long term management plan is crucial if these patients are to be treated without dependency on such medication. The DC emphasised that it is incumbent on all medical practitioners to be apprised of current medical standards and prescribing practice, in the interests of their patients.
5. The DC found that Dr Ng had acted in disregard of his professional duties as he had continued to prescribe Subutex and / or Benzodiazepines without appropriate specialist referral even after the issuance of the MOH Guidelines in 2005. This lack of referral was both inappropriate and unprofessional.
6. In respect of the lack of proper documentation, the DC was of the view that it is important and in the interest of physicians to maintain patients' records, as ultimately

these will form the primary evidence of the work and treatment by them. The DC also found that the record keeping in Dr Ng's case was exceptionally poor as there was little, if any, detail of the clinical conditions of the patients and the management plan. The failure to maintain proper records amounts to professional misconduct.

7. The DC was of the view that such professional misconduct of the improper prescription of Subutex and / or Benzodiazepines attracts substantial punishment, given the serious consequences for the patients if the proper prescription practice is not carried out.

8. After taking into consideration all the relevant factors, the DC ordered that Dr Ng:
 - (a) be suspended for a period of 6 months;

 - (b) be fined the sum of \$6,000;

 - (c) be censured;

 - (d) give a written undertaking to the Medical Council that he will not engage in the conduct complained of or any similar conduct; and

 - (e) pay the costs and expenses of and incidental to these inquiry proceedings, including the costs of the counsel to the SMC and the Legal Assessor.

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