



SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

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PRESS RELEASE

DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY FOR DR LEONG YEW KIN

1. A Disciplinary Committee ("DC") Inquiry was held for Dr Leong Yew Kin ("Dr Leong") in August 2010 (the "Inquiry"). The proceedings arose out of a complaint to the Singapore Medical Council ("SMC") by the Ministry of Health ("MOH"). At the time of the complaint, Dr Leong was practising at the Singapore Family Clinic located at Blk 153 Bukit Batok Street 11 #01-284, Singapore 650153 (the "Clinic").
2. The DC convicted Dr Leong on 15 charges of professional misconduct for failing to exercise due care in the management of his patients, in that he had inappropriately prescribed Codeine-containing medication and / or Benzodiazepines to his patients over periods of time.
3. In arriving at its decision, the DC considered the SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines ("ECEG") as well as the guidelines issued by MOH in relation to the prescription of Benzodiazepines and Codeine-containing medication. The DC was of the view that the evidence disclosed that Dr Leong had failed to:
 - a) adequately assess his patients' conditions;
 - b) arrange appropriate and timely investigations, such as X-rays or blood investigations for his patients;
 - c) refer his patients to specialists but instead persisted in practising areas of medicine where he has little or insufficient experience or knowledge;
 - d) keep clear, accurate, legible and sufficient records of his attendances, advice and management of his patients' illnesses;

e) prescribe, dispense or supply medicine on clear medical grounds and in reasonable quantities as appropriate to his patients' needs; and

f) inform his patients about the prescribed medicines or their side effects.

4. It was noted by the DC that it was common knowledge amongst doctors that Codeine-containing medication ought to be prescribed with great care. The DC was of the view that Dr Leong's practice of frequently prescribing Codeine² containing medication was unacceptable professional conduct. With regard to Benzodiazepines, the DC noted that the MOH Guidelines for Prescribing Benzodiazepines ("Guidelines") warned that *"Benzodiazepines are potentially addictive drugs which should be prescribed under specific circumstances when the benefit of the treatment outweighs the risks of adverse effect. Doctors should therefore carefully assess the indications for benzodiazepine use before prescribing the drugs"*. The DC found that Dr Leong ignored MOH's advice on prescribing Benzodiazepines and was in breach of the provisions of the Guidelines.
5. The DC was of the view that the conduct of Dr Leong with regard to his prescription practice and patient management indicated a pattern of intentional and deliberate departure from standards observed or approved by members of the medical profession of good repute and competency. Accordingly, the DC found that Dr Leong was guilty of the charges preferred against him.
6. In the circumstances, taking the evidence and mitigating factors into consideration, the DC ordered that Dr Leong:
 - a) be suspended for a period of **6 months**;
 - b) be fined a sum of **\$5,000**;
 - c) be censured;
 - d) gives a written undertaking to SMC that he will not engage in the conduct complained of and any similar conduct; and
 - e) pays the cost and expenses of and incidental to these proceedings, including the costs of the solicitors to the SMC and the Legal Assessor.

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