



SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

16 College Road, #01-01 College of Medicine Building, Singapore 169854

E-mail Address: moh_smc@moh.gov.sg

Website: <http://www.smc.gov.sg>

Fax Number: (65) 6258-2134

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PRESS RELEASE

DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY FOR DR CHUA BOON LING

1. A Disciplinary Committee (DC) inquiry ("Inquiry") was held for Dr Chua Boon Ling ("Dr Chua"), age 43 years, of Simon Road Family Clinic located at 9 Simon Road Singapore 545895. The Inquiry was concluded in July this year.
2. Dr Chua faced 14 charges of professional misconduct for failing to exercise due care in the management of the patients with benzodiazepines, and/or medication containing codeine.
3. The charges were that Dr Chua had (a) inappropriately prescribed benzodiazepines, and/or medication containing codeine, (b) failed to properly record or document in the patients' Patient Medical Records, sufficient details of the patients' diagnosis, symptoms, condition, advice given and/or any management plan to enable him to properly assess the patient's medical condition during the period of treatment, and (c) failed to refer the patients to a medical specialist and/or to a psychiatrist for further management.
4. Dr Chua contested all 14 charges. At the conclusion of the inquiry, Dr Chua was convicted on 9 charges.
5. The DC found that Dr Chua had inappropriately prescribed benzodiazepines on an indefinite basis to his patients and that this was not an accepted medical practice and cannot be in the interests of the patients. The DC noted that benzodiazepines were highly addictive and it was incumbent on the prescribing physician to exercise great care and control to ensure that his patients do not develop an addiction to the medication.
6. The DC also found that Dr Chua had failed to properly maintain therelevant patients' records for the management of his patients' treatment. Dr Chua's failure to do so

amounted to professional misconduct. Given the extent of the patients' dependence and addiction to the medications prescribed, the DC did not accept that Dr Chua was in a position to continue with his management of the patients and that Dr Chua had failed to refer the patients for specialist treatment, or for co-management with a specialist. The DC noted that such a failure was inappropriate and unprofessional in that the dependency of the patients was left unchecked.

7. In making its decision, the DC also considered several mitigating factors, including Dr Chua's personal mitigating factors.
8. In the circumstances, taking the evidence and mitigating factors into consideration, the DC ordered that Dr Chua:
 - (a) be suspended for a period of 4 months
 - (b) be fined the sum of \$5,000;
 - (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 proceedings.
9. Dr Chua filed an appeal to the High Court which was subsequently withdrawn. His suspension took effect on 12 October 2010.

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