



SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

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PRESS RELEASE

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE INQUIRY FOR DR KHAW CHIN CHOON

1. A Disciplinary Committee (DC) Inquiry ("Inquiry") was held for Dr Khaw Chin Choon ("Dr Khaw"), age 46 years, a General Practitioner who practised at Ren Medical Clinic located at Blk 101, Yishun Avenue 5, #01-31, Singapore 760601, on 30 September 2011. The proceedings arose out of a complaint to the Singapore Medical Council (SMC) dated 5 November 2008 by the Ministry of Health.
2. Dr Khaw pleaded guilty to 9 charges of professional misconduct for failing to exercise due care in the management and/or treatment of his patients relating to the inappropriate prescription of hypnotics including Benzodiazepines and cough mixtures containing Codeine. In addition, 4 other similar charges were taken into consideration by the DC for the purposes of sentencing.
3. The particulars of the charges included :-
 - (a) inappropriate prescription of hypnotics (including Benzodiazepines) and/or codeine-containing cough mixtures to patients;
 - (b) failure to maintain in the patient's medical records sufficient details of the assessment of the patient and the need to continue repeat and regular prescription of codeine-containing cough mixtures;
 - (c) failure to refer the patient to a medical specialist and/or a psychiatrist for further and/or joint management; and/or

- (d) dispensing benzodiazepines together with codeine-containing cough mixtures without advising the relevant patient of the risk of cross-tolerance.
4. In arriving at its decision, the DC noted the following :-
- (a) That Dr Khaw had acted in disregard of his professional duties because the improper and prolonged prescription of codeine-containing medication and/or benzodiazepines is inappropriate, unprofessional and potentially addictive and that in such cases, harm may be caused to patients;
 - (b) That it is incumbent on all medical practitioners to carry out proper prescribing practice, in the interests of their practice and patients; and
 - (c) That misconduct of improper prescription of codeine-containing medication with benzodiazepines will attract a substantial punishment, which usually involves a period of suspension for the medical practitioner.
5. In the circumstances, taking the evidence and mitigating factors into consideration, the DC ordered that Dr Khaw :-
- (a) be suspended from practice for a period of 3 months;
 - (b) be fined the sum of \$3,000;
 - (c) be censured;
 - (d) gives a written undertaking to the Medical Council that he will not engage in the conduct complained of or any similar conduct; and
 - (e) pays the costs and expenses of and incidental to these inquiry proceedings, including the costs of the SMC's counsel and the Legal Assessor.
6. The DC also ordered that the Grounds of Decision be published.
7. Dr Khaw's 3-months suspension took effect on 31 October 2011.

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