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PRESS RELEASE

DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY FOR DR TAN YANG KHAI

1. A Disciplinary Committee ("DC") Inquiry ("the Inquiry") was held on 30 November 2012 for Dr Tan Yang Khai ("Dr Tan"), age 65 years.
2. The Inquiry arose from a complaint dated 8 April 2010 by the Ministry of Health ("MOH") to the Singapore Medical Council ("SMC"). At the time of the complaint, Dr Tan was practising as a General Practitioner at Teck Ghee Clinic located at Blk 451 Ang Mo Kio Avenue 10, #01-1765, Singapore 560451.
3. Dr Tan pleaded guilty to 10 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). In addition, the SMC and Dr Tan gave consent for 8 similar charges to be taken into consideration by the DC for the purposes of sentencing.
4. The particulars of the charges against Dr Tan included :-
 - (a) failure to prescribe hypnotic drugs (including Benzodiazepines) on clear medical grounds and/or in reasonable quantities as appropriate to the patient's needs;
 - (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 hypnotics drugs;
 - (c) failure to warn his patients of potential addiction to hypnotics drugs as part of the treatment/management plan for the patient; and/or
 - (d) failure to refer the patient to a medical specialist and/or a psychiatrist for further and/or joint management.

5. In the course of the Inquiry, the DC noted the following matters :-
 - (a) a medical practitioner ought to adhere to the relevant MOH Guidelines for the prescription of benzodiazepines unless there are good reasons to depart from them; and
 - (b) misconduct involving inappropriate prescription of benzodiazepines and other hypnotics is serious and will invariably attract a period of suspension.
6. In arriving at its decision, the DC also considered the following mitigating factors:-
 - (a) Dr Tan is remorseful;
 - (b) Dr Tan has a long unblemished record of 37 years, and he is a first-time offender;
 - (c) Dr Tan pleaded guilty and has thereby saved time and expenses which would have been incurred by a prolonged inquiry; and
 - (d) Dr Tan produced many testimonials as well as the fact that there is evidence that he had provided free or subsidized services to the poor and needy, demonstrating his compassionate nature.
7. Taking the evidence and mitigating factors into consideration, the DC ordered that Dr Tan :-
 - (a) be suspended from practice for a period of 3 months;
 - (b) be fined the sum of \$5,000;
 - (c) be censured;
 - (d) give a written undertaking to the SMC 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 SMC's counsel and the Legal Assessor.
8. The DC also ordered that the Grounds of Decision be published.

9. Dr Tan's 3-month suspension will take effect on 10 February 2013.

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