

本署檔號 **Our Ref.** : (17) in DH SEB CD/8/19/4

27 May 2016

Dear Medical Superintendent,

A suspected case of botulism in Hong Kong

We would like to draw your attention to a suspected case of botulism affecting a 47-year-old woman recorded by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health.

According to the information provided by the attending physician, the patient received Botox injection in a beauty centre in Mainland China and developed progressive generalized weakness, progressively increasing dizziness, difficulty in swallowing, slurring of speech and shortness of breath since 21/5/2016. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Caritas Medical Centre on 24/5/2016 and was admitted on the same day. On admission, she was found to have bilateral proximal muscle weakness and bilateral ptosis. She was transferred to the intensive care unit on 25/5/2016 and anti-toxin treatment was given. Her condition was stable after management.

*Clostridium botulinum* is a spore-forming, obligate anaerobic bacterium which can produce neurotoxin that causes botulism in human. There are different clinical categories of botulism including foodborne botulism, wound botulism, infant botulism or intestinal botulism and; inadvertent, following botulinum toxin injection. Early symptoms are marked fatigue, weakness and vertigo, usually followed by blurred vision, dry mouth and difficulty in swallowing and speaking. Vomiting, diarrhoea, constipation and abdominal swelling may also occur. The disease can progress to weakness in the neck and arms, after which the respiratory muscles and muscles of the lower body are affected. The paralysis may make breathing difficult and is potentially life-threatening.



The same bacterium *Clostridium botulinum* is used to produce Botox, a pharmaceutical product predominantly injected for clinical and cosmetic use. Treatment using botulinum toxin should be prescribed by a locally registered medical

practitioner. Although Botox uses purified and heavily diluted botulinum neurotoxin type A, occasional side effects are still observed.

In Hong Kong, botulism has become a notifiable disease since 14 July 2008. If you encounter patients with clinical signs, symptoms, or history suspicious for botulism, please refer them to hospital promptly for clinical management and report the case to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of CHP via fax (2477 2770) using the reporting form, phone (2477 2772) or CENO On-line ([https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS\\_CENO\\_ONLINE/ceno.html](https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html)). Please also call Medical Control Officer at 7116 3300 a/c 9179 outside office hour for prompt investigation. Moreover, you may wish to refer to the following website for further information:

Botulism: [http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/health\\_topics/9/24.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/health_topics/9/24.html)

Botox: [http://www.dh.gov.hk/english/useful/useful\\_medical\\_beauty/files/2\\_Botulinum\\_Toxin\\_Injection\\_Eng\\_2015.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.hk/english/useful/useful_medical_beauty/files/2_Botulinum_Toxin_Injection_Eng_2015.pdf)

Please draw the attention of the healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/ working with you to the above. Thank you for your continuous support in combating infectious diseases.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection  
Department of Health