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Dear Doctor,

**Updated situation of Hand, Foot and Mouth disease (HFMD) and
Enterovirus 71 (EV71) infection**

Further to the letter dated April 13, I would like to update you on the latest situation of HFMD and EV71 infection in Hong Kong, and solicit your assistance in reporting patients who present with severe complications possibly due to EV71 as well as advising parents on the necessary precautionary measures.

In Hong Kong, a continuous rise in HFMD activity is noted since March. As of May 27, 211 HFMD/herpangina institutional outbreaks were recorded this year. This has exceeded the number reported in the whole year of 2007 to 2009 (ranged from 103 to 167 outbreaks). Besides, the sentinel surveillance system based at general practitioners and child care centres/kindergartens has also detected a sustained high activity of HFMD. In addition, 33 cases of laboratory confirmed EV71 infection were recorded so far this year. While most of the EV71 cases presented with mild symptoms of HFMD, three cases (F/18 months, F/18 years and F/10 years) developed severe complications including meningitis (in 2 cases) and meningoencephalitis (in 1 case). Three other suspected severe complications related to enterovirus infection, affecting a 35-year-old female who died on May 23, a 34-year-old female and a 43-year-old male, were also recorded. Further confirmatory tests are on-going. So far, no genetic change has been detected in recent EV71 isolates.

The disease activity has also increased in neighbouring areas. In Mainland China, there were 248,609 HFMD cases reported in April, which was higher than 37,567, 23,862 and 77,756 in January, February and March, respectively. For Guangdong Province, 32,275 HFMD cases were reported in April this year as



compared with 14,961 cases in April last year. Increased HFMD activity was also noted in Singapore with 9,720 HFMD cases reported in the first 20 weeks this year as compared with 8,368 cases reported in the corresponding period last year. In Taiwan, there were 8 severe enterovirus infections reported as of May 27 this year while 29 cases were reported in the whole year of 2009.

I would like to remind you that EV71 is a statutory notifiable disease in Hong Kong. Please report all ***laboratory confirmed cases of EV71 OR clinical case who present with severe complications possibly due to EV71***, to us for prompt control of the disease in the community. I appended again the Reporting Criteria for your perusal.

We enlist your continual support in providing the following **health advice to parents** whose children suffer from HFMD:

- Children with HFMD should be refrained from nurseries/kindergartens/schools or social activities such as parties, interest classes, swimming until all vesicles have dried up and symptoms subsided;
- Seek medical advice urgently if the child develops important symptoms and signs suggesting severe illness including persistent high fever, repeated vomiting, persistent sleepiness or drowsiness or myoclonic jerks or sudden limb weakness.
- Protect other family members, especially children, from getting the infection through strict personal and environmental hygiene, including always wash hands thoroughly after changing diapers or handling respiratory secretions, and clean thoroughly toys or appliances which are contaminated by the child's secretions with 1 in 49 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of 5.25% bleach with 49 parts of water);
- For parents who are taking their unaffected children during travel, advise them to undertake similar stringent measures when visiting friends or relatives in other places.

As EV71 is associated with higher risk of complications and the virus may be excreted in stools for some weeks, CHP advises children suffering from laboratory confirmed EV71 infections to stay away from school for two additional weeks after

symptoms have subsided.

If you encounter an increase in the number of clients with HFMD coming from the same institution or ***laboratory confirmed cases of EV71 OR clinical case who present with severe complications possibly due to EV71***, please inform the Central Notification Office of CHP (Telephone: 2477 2772, Fax: 2477 2770) or CENO On-line at <http://www.chp.gov.hk/ceno> as early as possible. ***Case of HFMD with severe symptom/sign could be reported as a suspected case of EV71***. CHP will start epidemiological investigations and take appropriate control measures. The reporting criteria of EV71 are also available in CENO On-line. A regular update on HFMD and EV71 infection, the 'EV SCAN' has been published on CHP website to summarize the latest statistics of these diseases. Please visit the website of CHP at <http://www.chp.gov.hk> for more information on HFMD and EV71 infection.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr SK CHUANG)

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Reporting criteria for Enterovirus 71 Infection

An individual fulfilling either the ***Clinical Criteria OR Laboratory Criteria*** should be reported to CHP for further investigation.

Clinical Criteria

A person presented with the following condition :

1. Hand, foot and mouth disease or herpangina; AND
2. One of the following complications:
 - Meningitis; OR
 - Encephalitis; OR
 - Acute flaccid paralysis; OR
 - Other central nervous system complication (e.g. cerebellar ataxia); OR
 - Myocarditis; OR
 - Pulmonary edema or hemorrhage

Laboratory Criteria

Any of the following:

- Isolation of EV71 from a clinical specimen
- Detection of EV71 by PCR from a clinical specimen