



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY  
PRESS RELEASE  
16 JANUARY 2004**

## **HSA DETECTS COUNTERFEIT CIALIS AND CAUTIONS AGAINST BUYING FROM ILLEGAL SOURCES**

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) has detected the presence of counterfeit Cialis tablets being sold by illegal peddlers in the black market. This was among the findings arising from recent joint operations conducted by HSA's Centre for Drug Administration and Singapore Customs' Special Investigation Branch, in which a total of four Chinese nationals were caught and various types of counterfeit and unregistered medicines were seized.

2 Two of the offenders have already been charged and convicted in Court. Based on further leads, two separate operations were conducted on 13 and 14 Jan 2004, where the other two offenders were caught after they attempted to sell the illegal medicines to undercover HSA officers. They will be charged once investigations into their cases are completed.

3 Cialis, which contains tadalafil, is a medicinal product indicated for the treatment of male erectile dysfunction. This product was registered with HSA in January 2003, and genuine Cialis is distributed locally by Eli Lilly (S) Pte Ltd [and its agents].

4 The counterfeit Cialis tablets seized by HSA are labelled to contain 20mg of tadalafil and have packaging which mimics that of the genuine product. However, analysis of the counterfeit tablets by HSA's Centre for Analytical Science found it to contain varying amounts of tadalafil mixed with sildenafil (another erectile dysfunction drug). The local distributor has confirmed that the packaging of the seized tablets differed from that of the genuine article and that the seized stocks are counterfeits. [See Annex A1 for the photographs of genuine and counterfeit Cialis.]

5 Besides the counterfeit Cialis, HSA also seized counterfeit Viagra tablets as well as other unregistered medicines containing sildenafil destined for the black market. The local distributor of Viagra, Pfizer Pte Ltd, has similarly confirmed that the seized stocks are counterfeits.

6 HSA takes a serious view of anyone who attempts to import or sell any counterfeit, unregistered or otherwise illegal medicines. Medicinal products in Singapore are regulated under the Medicines Act and Poisons Act, and anyone found guilty of contravening the law is liable to be fined up to \$10,000 or imprisoned for up to 2 years or both.

7 Noting that medicines from dubious and illegal sources can find their way into Singapore, HSA will continue with its surveillance and enforcement efforts to detect counterfeit and unregistered medicines that may appear in the local market. HSA will also continue to work closely with other law enforcement agencies including Singapore Customs, Immigration & Checkpoints Authority and the Police, to prevent the illegal import and sale of counterfeit and unregistered medicines in Singapore.

### **CONSUMER ADVISORY: A REMINDER ON SAFE DRUG PRACTICES**

8 Members of the public are reminded not to purchase any medicinal products from dubious sources such as unfamiliar individuals and unlicensed premises as well as over the Internet from foreign or unknown websites. Besides the concern that the safety, efficacy and quality of the products cannot be vouched for, there is also a high likelihood that the products from such sources are counterfeits.

9 The risk posed by using products from such sources is even greater when they are prescription medicines such as Cialis or Viagra, which should only be used under the supervision of qualified medical practitioners and for the correct indications. If used improperly, they can cause serious and sometimes fatal adverse effects.

10 While HSA has a comprehensive regulatory system in place to protect the public against counterfeit medicines and the illegal sale of medicines, the enforcement of these controls can be made more effective with the co-operation of the public. HSA encourages members of the public to report any medicinal products that they suspect are counterfeits or are being illegally sold (*see also Annex B on Consumer Education Information: How to Spot Counterfeit Medicines*). Reports can be made to our inspectors at the Centre for Drug Administration, HSA as follows:

Mail / Walk-in:	Compliance Branch Centre for Drug Administration Health Sciences Authority 2, Jalan Bukit Merah Singapore 169547
Telephone:	63255412 (during office hours)
Facsimile:	63255628

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#### **About HSA's Centre for Drug Administration**

The Centre for Drug Administration [CDA] of HSA is the national agency administering the pre- and post-marketing regulation of drugs, innovative

therapeutics and health-related products to safeguard public health. It also contributes to the formulation of national drug policies.

### **About the Health Sciences Authority**

At the Health Sciences Authority [HSA], we apply medical, pharmaceutical and specialised scientific expertise to safeguard public health and safety in Singapore. As one multidisciplinary agency, we serve as the national regulator of all therapeutic products by providing a seamless yet rigorous regulatory process to the healthcare and biomedical sciences industries. We also operate the national blood bank, Bloodbank@HSA, protecting the integrity of the nation's blood supply. As the national reference agency, we exploit specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in order to serve the administration of justice and enhance safety in our community. For more details, visit [\*\*www.hsa.gov.sg\*\*](http://www.hsa.gov.sg).

**ANNEX A**

**SINGAPORE, 16 JANUARY 2004**

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**PHOTOGRAPH COMPARISON OF GENUINE AND COUNTERFEIT CIALIS**



**Cialis - Original**



**Cialis - Counterfeit**



**Cialis - Counterfeit**

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**CONSUMER EDUCATION INFORMATION : HOW TO SPOT COUNTERFEIT  
MEDICINES**

**A. Content of Counterfeit Medicines**

- Although the packaging of some counterfeit medicines may closely resemble the authentic product, the counterfeit may not contain the actual active substance.
- Even when the active substance is actually present in a counterfeit, its level of content may vary widely – from very low levels, to very high levels, even exceeding the stated amount.
- Counterfeit medicines may sometimes contain other substances or substitutes that may be harmful.
- Counterfeit medicines can also sometimes be expired products that may cause adverse effects or do not deliver the intended effects.

**B. How To Spot Counterfeit Medicines & What To Do**

1. If you have used a particular product before, look at the product and check for any difference in the appearance of the packaging or the medicine itself.
  - On the packaging, look out for the following :
    - design e.g. missing logo, different layout of packaging design;
    - colours e.g. faded colours, different colours;
    - words e.g. missing text, different font-type, different point size;
    - omission of expiry dates, batch numbers.
  - On the medicine itself, look out for changes in :
    - shape e.g. from a round to oval;
    - size e.g. slightly smaller or bigger than before;
    - colour e.g. different colour, different shading;
    - markings e.g. small logo/words printed or embossed on the medicine.
2. If you find any difference in the appearance of the product, as described above, you should make inquiries with your doctor or pharmacist.

3. If you have been taking a particular product for some time, and notice your body responding differently (e.g. new symptoms, adverse reactions), or not at all, you should consult your doctor.
4. If you suspect that you have been given a counterfeit medicine, report the matter to the Centre for Drug Administration of HSA during office hours as follows:

Mail / Walk-in : Compliance Branch  
Centre for Drug Administration  
Health Sciences Authority  
2, Jalan Bukit Merah  
Singapore 169547

Telephone : 6 3255412 (during office hours)

Facsimile : 6 3255628

**Health Sciences Authority**  
**16 January 2004**