



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE
18 JUNE 2015**

HSA SEIZES MORE THAN 11,000 UNITS OF ILLEGAL HEALTH PRODUCTS DURING WEEK OF INTERNATIONAL ENFORCEMENT OPERATION

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) seized more than 11,000 units of illegal health products in a week-long enforcement action code named Operation Pangea. This is the 8th year that HSA is taking part in this operation, which is coordinated by INTERPOL. From 9 to 16 June 2015, HSA intensified its surveillance of local Internet platforms to detect illegal health products that were being sold online in Singapore. HSA seized illegal health products with a total street value of more than S\$20,000. A total of 12 persons are currently assisting HSA in the investigations.

2 The illegal health products seized by HSA comprised western medicines, slimming products and contact lens. One of the seizures consisted of 400 capsules of an unlicensed medicine labelled as Viagra, which was promoted as a sexual enhancement drug. This was tested by HSA to contain the medicinal ingredient sildenafil, which can cause serious adverse effects when used without medical supervision. The seller had ordered this product online from an overseas website and intended to sell it for a value of 10 times the original cost. Another seizure comprised an unlicensed medicine labelled as Duromine, a weight loss medicine.

Please refer to **Annex A** for photographs of the products seized.

3 Aside from the period of intensified surveillance during Operation Pangea, HSA works closely with major local e-commerce websites like Carousell and Qoo10 to take down posts selling illegal health products. These websites have also provided guidelines to advise sellers on what health products cannot be sold online.

Advisory

4 Drugs used for sexual enhancement purposes may contain western medicinal ingredients which should only be taken under medical supervision. Taking these drugs unsupervised may be dangerous for patients with medical conditions such as heart problems, and may be fatal for those who are taking certain medicines for their heart condition.

5 Similarly, many slimming drugs are prescription medicines which should only be taken under medical supervision. Such products may contain undeclared potent ingredients that may seriously harm your health. Do not gamble with your health.

6 HSA would like to remind consumers of the dangers of purchasing health products from dubious sources, including the Internet. Consumers should be wary when buying health products online as they may be illegal, counterfeit or substandard, and may contain undeclared ingredients which can harm your health. Consumers should also seek early and proper medical attention for management of their medical conditions, instead of self-medicating.

7 Sellers should be cautious when sourcing for health products to sell and are reminded of their responsibility in ensuring the safety of the products and adherence to local legislations prior to introducing them to the market, including selling them online.

8 Anyone convicted of selling illegal health products may be liable for prosecution under the Health Products Act, Poisons Act and/or Medicines Act. Offenders will face a penalty fine of up to \$100,000 and/or imprisonment for a period of up to three years under the Health Products Act; a penalty fine of up to \$10,000 and/or imprisonment for a period of up to two years under the Poisons Act and a penalty fine of up to \$5,000 and/or imprisonment for a period of up to two years under the Medicines Act.

9 Members of the public who encounter illegal, counterfeit or other suspicious health products are encouraged to contact the Enforcement Branch of HSA at Tel: 68663485 or email: hsa_is@hsa.gov.sg. Additionally, members of the public are encouraged to visit www.health dangers.sg to learn more about the dangers of buying illegal health products from dubious sources.

Operation Pangea

10 Operation Pangea is an international Internet week of action targeting the illegal online sale of counterfeit and unlicensed medicines. HSA was among 236 participating agencies and 115 countries in this global Internet-based action coordinated by INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the Permanent Forum of International Pharmaceutical crime (PFIPC), the Heads of Medicines Agencies Working Group of Enforcement Officers (HMA WGEO), the pharmaceutical industry and the electronic payments industry. The global operation targets the three main components abused in the illegal website trade and the people behind the illegal activity: the Internet infrastructure, the electronic payment system and the delivery service.

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About the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) applies medical, pharmaceutical and scientific expertise through its three professional groups, Health Products Regulation, Blood Services and Applied Sciences, to protect and advance national health and safety. HSA is a multidisciplinary authority. It serves as the national regulator for health products, ensuring they are wisely regulated to meet standards of safety, quality and efficacy. As the national blood service, it is responsible for providing a safe and adequate blood supply. It also applies specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in serving the administration of justice. For more details, visit <http://www.hsa.gov.sg/>.

For more updates on public health and safety matters, follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/HSASg](https://twitter.com/HSASg).

About HSA's Health Products Regulation Group

The Health Products Regulation Group (HPRG) of HSA ensures that drugs, innovative therapeutics, medical devices and health-related products are wisely regulated and meet appropriate safety, quality and efficacy standards. It contributes to the development of biomedical sciences in Singapore by administering a robust, scientific and responsive regulatory framework.

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Photographs of the Seized Products

(I) A variety of illegal health products seized by HSA



(II) Seizure of weight loss drug Duromine



(III) Seizure of sexual enhancement drug Viagra

