



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE
10 FEBRUARY 2020

**HSA ALERT: ‘TIAN MA TU CHUNG SEVEN LEAVE GINSENG’,
‘PERLIERE MIMI PEARL CREAM’, ‘IMPACTRA’ FOUND TO CONTAIN
POTENT MEDICINAL INGREDIENTS**

Two products caused serious adverse effects in consumers

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is alerting members of the public not to purchase or use the following health or cosmetic products. They contain potent medicinal ingredients which are prohibited in such products. Two of these products have caused serious adverse effects in consumers. The third product contained dangerously high levels of a potent medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction.

Product name	Potent medicinal ingredients	Source of purchase
‘TIAN MA TU CHUNG SEVEN LEAVE GINSENG’ ‘天麻杜仲七叶参’	Chlorpheniramine Dexamethasone	Medical hall in Malaysia
‘PERLIERE MIMI PEARL CREAM’	Clobetasol propionate Ketoconazole Sulfamethoxazole Trimethoprim	Perliere’s website and various e-commerce platforms
‘IMPACTRA’	Chloropretadalafil Sildenafil Tadalafil	Gold Tree Pte Ltd’s website and various e-commerce platforms

Please refer to **Annex A** for photos of the products and **Annex B** for the possible adverse effects of the medicinal ingredients found in these products.

POTENT STEROID IN 'TIAN MA TU CHUNG SEVEN LEAVE GINSENG' CAUSED ADVERSE EFFECTS IN MAN

2 A male patient in his 50s developed abnormal blood cortisol levels¹ following long-term consumption of 'TIAN MA TU CHUNG SEVEN LEAVE GINSENG', which was purchased in Malaysia.

3 HSA tested this product and detected two medicinal ingredients: chlorpheniramine, an antihistamine, and dexamethasone, a potent steroid. Dexamethasone can only be obtained through prescription by a doctor while chlorpheniramine should be obtained from a doctor or pharmacist. Long-term unsupervised use of steroids like dexamethasone can cause increased blood glucose levels (which may lead to diabetes), Cushing's syndrome (a round face or 'moon face' appearance and upper body obesity with thin limbs), and other serious adverse effects (refer to Annex B).

4 HSA had alerted members of the public in August 2011² to the same product, which had caused an elderly lady to suffer Cushing's syndrome, high blood pressure, hallucination and memory loss. She had obtained the product from a relative who had purchased it in Malaysia.

WOMAN WHO USED 'PERLIERE MIMI PEARL CREAM' HAD STEROID WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

5 A woman in her 30s developed symptoms of redness, extreme itchiness and burning sensation after she stopped using 'PERLIERE MIMI PEARL CREAM'. She had purchased the product online and used it for over two years.

¹ Potent steroids may suppress the normal production of cortisol, a natural steroid hormone produced by the body. This can lead to generalised weakness, muscle and joint pain, low blood pressure or shock.

² HSA press release - <https://www.hsa.gov.sg/announcements/press-release/hsa-warns-against-taking-three-health-products-found-to-contain-potent-western-medicinal-ingredients>

6 HSA's tests found that the product contained four medicinal ingredients: trimethoprim and sulfamethoxazole, which are antibiotics; ketoconazole, an anti-fungal medicine; and clobetasol propionate, a potent steroid. These ingredients can pose serious health risks if used without medical supervision. Her skin specialist confirmed that she had developed steroid withdrawal symptoms.

HIGH LEVELS OF MALE ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION MEDICINES DETECTED IN 'IMPACTRA'

7 During HSA's routine surveillance of products in the market, 'IMPACTRA' was detected to contain sildenafil, tadalafil and chloropretadalafil. These are prescription medicines used for the treatment of male erectile dysfunction. Tadalafil was present in high levels of up to 10 times the maximum daily dose. These high levels can cause serious adverse effects such as low blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, and painful and exceedingly long erections (priapism) which can lead to permanent erectile dysfunction if left untreated.

8 'IMPACTRA' was sold by 'Gold Tree Pte Ltd' and marketed for "male sexual enhancement". It carried claims including "boost libido" and "causing an increase in testosterone level". The product also claimed falsely that "its all-natural formula ensures no inclusion of harmful synthetic chemicals", when it actually contained three prescription medicines.

9 HSA has directed the companies selling 'PERLIERE MIMI PEARL CREAM' and 'IMPACTRA' to stop the sale of the products, and is also working with local e-commerce website administrators to take down affected postings.

ADVISORY TO CONSUMERS

10 Consumers are advised to:

- See a doctor as soon as possible if you have taken 'TIAN MA TU CHUNG SEVEN LEAVE GINSENG' or used 'PERLIERE MIMI PEARL CREAM', as

they contain potent steroids. Discontinuation of steroids without proper medical supervision can cause serious withdrawal symptoms such as fatigue, confusion and low blood pressure, especially if you have been taking the product for more than a few weeks.

- Stop taking 'IMPACTRA' immediately and consult a doctor if you feel unwell or are concerned about your health.
- Be wary of health products that promise to deliver quick and miraculous effects, or carry exaggerated claims.
- Avoid purchasing health products from unfamiliar sources overseas, and exercise caution when buying such products online. You cannot be certain where and how these products were made. They could contain potent medicinal ingredients which can seriously harm your health.

ADVISORY TO SELLERS AND SUPPLIERS

11 All sellers and suppliers must stop selling these products immediately. It is illegal to sell and supply such products, which contain potent medicinal ingredients or banned substances. Sellers and suppliers are liable to prosecution and if convicted, may be imprisoned for up to 3 years and/or fined up to \$100,000.

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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.

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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PICTURES OF THE THREE PRODUCTS

'TIAN MA TU CHUNG SEVEN LEAVE GINSENG'

‘天麻杜仲七叶参’



'PERLIERE MIMI PEARL CREAM'



'IMPACTRA'



POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF POTENT INGREDIENTS FOUND IN THE PRODUCTS

Chlorpheniramine

Chlorpheniramine is an antihistamine used to relieve allergic reactions such as hives, asthma and rhinitis. The possible adverse effects of chlorpheniramine include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, constipation and drowsiness.

Dexamethasone and clobetasol propionate

Dexamethasone and clobetasol propionate are potent steroids that are usually prescribed for inflammatory conditions and should only be used under strict medical supervision. Long-term unsupervised use of steroids (including topical use where the steroid can be absorbed into the body) can cause increased blood glucose levels (which may lead to diabetes), high blood pressure, cataracts, muscular and bone disorders, an increased risk of infections and Cushing's syndrome (a round face or 'moon face' appearance and upper body obesity with thin limbs). Discontinuation of steroids without proper medical supervision can cause serious withdrawal symptoms such as fatigue, confusion and low blood pressure, especially when the product has been taken for more than a few weeks.

Ketoconazole

Ketoconazole is a medicine used to treat fungal infections and is prohibited in skincare cosmetic products. The possible adverse effects associated with the inappropriate use of creams containing ketoconazole may include skin irritation, itching of the skin and skin rash.

Sulfamethoxazole and Trimethoprim

Sulfamethoxazole and trimethoprim are antibiotics used to treat bacterial infections. Antibiotics are prohibited in skincare cosmetic products and antibiotics (including in creams) should only be used under medical supervision. Inappropriate use of antibiotics without medical supervision can lead to its decreased effectiveness. Other

possible adverse effects associated with the use of topical antibiotics include skin irritation, skin rash, itching of the skin and hypersensitivity reactions.

Sildenafil, tadalafil, chloropretadalafil

Sildenafil and tadalafil are potent prescription medicines used to treat male erectile dysfunction and they should only be used under medical supervision. Inappropriate use of these medicines without medical supervision would put consumers at increased risk of serious adverse effects. They include stroke, heart attack, low blood pressure and priapism (painful and exceedingly long erections). These medicines should not be used by patients who are taking heart medications such as nitrates as they can cause potentially life-threatening low blood pressure, which may lead to death. Patients with heart problems are also at increased risk of cardiovascular adverse effects such as heart attack, stroke and chest pain. Chloropretadalafil is chemically related to tadalafil and consumers can be at risk of experiencing adverse effects similar to tadalafil.