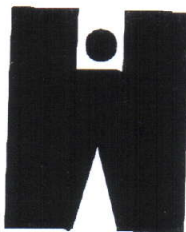


衛生署
藥物註冊組

香港九龍南昌街 382 號公共衛生檢測中心三樓



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
PHARMACEUTICALS REGISTRATION SECTION

3/F, Public Health Laboratory Centre,
382 Nam Cheong Street,
Kowloon,
Hong Kong.

電話號碼 Tel. No.: 2319 8458
詢問處 Enquiries (852)2319 8458
傳真號碼 Faxline No. (852)2803 4962

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BY FAX

6 April 2011

Dr. Raymond LIANG
President
Hong Kong Academy of Medicine
(Fax Number: 2505 5577)

Dear Dr. LIANG,

Alert on use of Quinine Sulphate Products for nocturnal leg cramps

Your attention is drawn to the warning issued by Health Sciences Authority of Singapore against the use of quinine sulphate for leg cramp management because of unpredictable serious and life-threatening haematological reactions in addition to hypersensitivity, heart and kidney adverse events which may require medical intervention, including hospitalisation.

Quinine sulphate is an antimalarial drug which is also used in some places for the treatment of nocturnal leg cramps. However, as night leg cramps do not lead to serious consequences, the benefits of using quinine to treat this condition is outweighed by the risks of potentially fatal haematological reactions.

In fact, several drug regulatory authorities, including Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration and US' Food and Drug Administration, have already required the removal of leg cramps from quinine-containing products' list of indications. For details, please visit HSA website at http://www.hsa.gov.sg/publish/hsaportal/en/health_products_regulation/safety_information/product_safety_alerts/safety_alerts_2011/quinine_sulphate_and.html

In Hong Kong, there are four registered pharmaceutical products containing quinine sulphate or quinine bisulphate. Nocturnal leg cramp treatment is an approved indicated use here. So far, no adverse event report has been received by Department of Health.

The above indication will be revisited in the coming meeting of the Registration Committee of the Pharmacy and Poisons Board. Meanwhile, healthcare professionals are advised not to use quinine products for the management of leg cramps.

Please remind your members to report any adverse events caused by the drug to the Adverse Drug Reaction Monitoring Unit of Department of Health (tel. no.: 2319 8633, fax: 2147-0457 or email: adr@dh.gov.hk). For details, please refer to the website: <http://www.psdh.gov.hk> at Pharmaceutical Service under "Reporting an Adverse Drug Reaction".

Yours sincerely,


(Ms Pamela LI)
for Chief Pharmacist