

衛生署藥物辦公室
藥物註冊及進出口管制部

香港九龍南昌街 382 號公共衛生檢測中心三樓



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DRUG OFFICE
DRUG REGISTRATION AND
IMPORT/EXPORT CONTROL DIVISION
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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(IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE THIS FILE REF.)

Dear Healthcare Professionals,

Serotonin Blocking Drugs Used to Treat Nausea and Vomiting – Risk of Serotonin Syndrome

Your attention is drawn to Health Canada's announcement regarding the risk of serotonin syndrome associated with serotonin blocking drugs dolasetron, granisetron, ondansetron and palonosetron, which are used for treating nausea and vomiting.

Serotonin syndrome occurs when serotonin accumulates to high levels. This usually happens with combinations of certain serotonin drugs, but may also occur with a single drug.

It is very important to diagnose serotonin syndrome early as it can be fatal if not treated. Symptoms of serotonin syndrome may include agitation, confusion, fast heartbeat, muscle twitching or stiffness, fever, loss of consciousness or coma. As serotonin syndrome can be misdiagnosed, it is important that patients who experience any of these symptoms should talk to a healthcare practitioner immediately.


Please refer to Health Canada's website for details:

<http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2014/39519a-eng.php>

In Hong Kong, there are 12 registered pharmaceutical products containing granisetron; 21 containing ondansetron; 3 containing palonosetron; and there is no registered pharmaceutical product containing dolasetron. All of them are prescription only medicines. So far, the Department of Health has received one adverse drug reaction report related to seizure suspected to be associated with the use of Zofran (ondansetron) and has not received any relevant adverse drug reaction report in connection with granisetron and palonosetron. In view of Health Canada's announcement, the matter will be discussed in the meeting of the Registration Committee of the Pharmacy and Poisons Board. Healthcare professionals are advised to balance the risk of possible adverse effects against the benefit of treatment.

Please report any adverse events caused by drugs to the Pharmacovigilance Unit of Department of Health (tel. no.: 2319 2920, fax: 2186 9845 or email: adr@dh.gov.hk). For details, please refer to the website at Drug Office under "ADR Reporting": <http://www.drugoffice.gov.hk/adr.html>. You may wish to visit the Drug Office's website for subscription and browsing of "Drug News" which is a monthly digest of drug safety news and information issued by Drug Office.

Yours faithfully,


(Mr. Grant NG)
for Assistant Director (Drug)

*We build a healthy Hong Kong and
aspire to be an internationally renowned public health authority*