



PRINCE OF WALES HOSPITAL  
威爾斯親王醫院

30-32 Ngan Shing Street, Sha Tin, N.T., Hong Kong Tel: (852) 2632 2211 Fax: (852) 2637 8244  
香港新界沙田銀城街三十至三十二號 電話：2632 2211 傳真：2637 8244

**Department of Chemical Pathology**

From: Professor C W K Lam  
Hon Chief of Service  
Department of Chemical Pathology

To: All COSs  
All DOMs and Ward Managers  
All Doctors  
NTE Cluster Hospitals

Tel/Fax No.: 2632 3338 / 2636 5090

Date: 25 February 2008

---

**Toxicology Investigation for Unprovoked Hypoglycaemia after taking Erectile Dysfunction Drugs**

Recently our NTEC hospitals have treated patients presenting with hypoglycaemia after taking over-the-counter medications for erectile dysfunction. Toxicology analysis of these patients' urine samples detected metabolites of glibenclamide and sildenafil. These cases have been referred to the Department of Health for further investigation.

Please be kindly reminded that for the above investigation, 20 mL spot urine should be sent to the PWH Chemical Pathology Laboratory for screening of oral hypoglycaemic agents. Equally importantly, **please provide adequate clinical information and relevant drug history including the suspected offending drug in the laboratory test request form** or an accompanying consultation form.

The latter requirement is crucial because each of the analytical platforms in our toxicology screening system is useful for the detection of a large but nevertheless limited number of drugs, and different appropriate platforms need to be used for screening different drugs. For example, oral hypoglycaemic agents are NOT detectable with the analytical platform used for routine Drug of Abuse (DOA) screening. Failure of providing relevant clinical information to the Duty Biochemist of toxicology screening may result in incorrect and falsely negative toxicology screening results. Under such circumstances, the requesting clinician may be liable to medico-legal responsibility.

**As an illustration**, in a case of unprovoked hypoglycaemia after taking drugs for erectile dysfunction, clinical information and drug history should include:

- Taken over-the-counter erectile dysfunction drugs;
- No history of DM, NOT taking OHA;

- Developed unprovoked hypoglycaemia
- To screen for OHA and sildenafil-related compounds

If there are any queries on the above arrangements, please contact our PWH Duty Biochemist at 2632-2685 or 2632-2331. Thank you for your kind attention.



Professor C W K Lam

AKCC/CWKL

Copy to:

Dr Fung Hong, CCE, NTEC

Dr K K Lai, SD(C&A), NTEC

Dr Michael W M Suen, CC(Path), NTEC

All Duty Biochemists, PWH

Mr K C Ho, DM(CP), PWH

Ms Candy Cheung, SMT(Path), AHNH/NDH