



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY  
PRESS RELEASE  
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## HSA ALERTS PUBLIC TO TWO ILLEGAL PAIN RELIEF PRODUCTS PURCHASED FROM OVERSEAS FOUND TO CONTAIN POTENT WESTERN MEDICINAL INGREDIENTS

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) is alerting members of the public to two illegal health products that were detected to contain potent western medicinal ingredients despite claims of all natural ingredients on their product labels. These two products are:

Product	Undeclared Western Medicinal Ingredients	Source of purchase
'JIN LONG Snakes' Bones Rheumatic Capsules' '金龙蛇骨风湿丸'	Betamethasone, Piroxicam, Oxethazaine, Paracetamol and Furosemide	Purchased from Internet from an overseas website
'Golden Dragon Linzi Dong Mai Dan' '金龙灵芝通脉丹'	Dexamethasone	Bought from medical hall overseas

Please refer to **Annex A** for pictures of the products.

2 One patient in his 60s, who had consumed 'JIN LONG Snakes' Bones Rheumatic Capsules' which claimed to treat rheumatism and pain, was found to suffer from Cushing's syndrome and gastric complications. Another patient in her 50s experienced rapid relief of her pain symptoms after taking 'Golden Dragon Linzi Dong Mai Dan'.

### Undeclared western medicinal ingredients found in the products

3 HSA's laboratory findings revealed the presence of several undeclared medicinal ingredients in these products including the potent steroids, betamethasone and dexamethasone, and a potent painkiller, piroxicam.

4 The steroids are usually prescribed for serious swelling and inflammatory conditions and should only be used under strict medical supervision. Long term unsupervised use of oral steroids can cause increased blood glucose levels leading to diabetes, high blood pressure, cataracts, muscular and bone disorders, an increased risk of infections and Cushing's syndrome, which is characterised by a round face or 'moon face', and upper body obesity with thin limbs.

5 Piroxicam, also known as a Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drug (NSAID), should also be used under strict medical supervision as it may potentially cause serious gastric bleeding. Please refer to **Annex B** for more information on the potential side effects of the undeclared medicinal ingredients found in the products.

### **HSA advisory**

6 Members of the public who are consuming these products are advised to:

(i) Consult a doctor as soon as possible before stopping the products. Sudden discontinuation of steroids without proper medical supervision can cause serious withdrawal symptoms such as weakness, fatigue, confusion and low blood pressure, especially when these products are taken for more than a few weeks. Undeclared western medicinal ingredients may cause possible adverse effects as well as drug interactions with consumers' own medications which can seriously harm health.

(ii) Be wary of complementary health products promising 'miraculous cures' and/or providing rapid relief of their medical conditions as they can also cause serious adverse effects which may be permanent and irreversible.

(iii) Avoid purchasing health products sold on the Internet. Such products are usually produced under poor manufacturing conditions with no quality control by unscrupulous persons who have little regard for human health, and may contain undeclared western medicinal ingredients or toxic ingredients, which can cause serious harm to a person.

(iv) Seek proper medical treatment for chronic medical conditions (such as arthritis and rheumatism) and not self-medicate.

7 HSA will take strong enforcement actions against those who engage in the sale and supply of health products containing undeclared potent medicinal ingredients. Anyone found to contravene the Poisons Act faces a penalty of up to \$10,000 and/or imprisonment for a period of up to two years under the Poisons Act.

8 Members of the public who have any information on the sale of these 2 illegal products or other illegal products may contact HSA's Enforcement Branch at Tel: 6866-3485 during office hours (Monday to Friday) or email: [hsa\\_is@hsa.gov.sg](mailto:hsa_is@hsa.gov.sg). Additionally, members of public are encouraged to visit [www.healthdangers.sg](http://www.healthdangers.sg) to learn more about the dangers of buying illegal health products from dubious sources.

**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](http://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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**‘JIN LONG Snakes’ Bones Rheumatic Capsules’ with its accompanying product leaflet**



The image shows a product leaflet on the left and two photographs of capsules on the right. The leaflet has a pink background and contains the following text:

**注意 特效 金 龍 蛇 骨 風 濕 丸 假 冒**

本品完全採用百步蛇、眼鏡蛇、龜殼花蛇骨髓與膽及營養最高之蛇葶丸精製而成。

蛇葶丸俱有促進通筋活血及強精補腦之效力。蛇骨髓有通血補之效能。蛇膽俱有止痛強肝，消除一切痛症，回復視覺力之作用。服用蛇骨風濕丸，對於下列之症，能迅速治療。

勞力過多，腰酸背痛、手足酸痛、風濕痛、關節炎、骨痛、坐骨神經痛、筋痛、頭痛、頸痛、閃骨、扭傷都有顯著之效力。

本品有促進血液循環，除去全身各部疼痛之作用。且絕無藥類之副作用，無論男女皆可安心服用。

用法：早晚一丸，飯後用開水服送。服後二十分鐘內不要飲茶。要認明膠囊印有英文字（金龍）才安心服用本品。

**“JIN LONG “SNAKES’ BONES RHEUMATIC CAPSULES**  
It contains refined extracts from snakes’ bones, galls and nutritious testis with Chinese nostrum. It is safe and has no side effect when taken.  
INDICATIONS: It is suitable for treatment of fatigue, rheumatism backache, arthritis, hand and foot ache, bone ache, spinal nerve pain, neck pain, tendon pain and twisted bones.  
DOSAGE: One each for morning and evening daily. Half dosage for child. Take it with drinking water.  
CAUTION: Do not take alcoholic drinks during treatment’s period.

台灣金龍毒蛇專門店 謹啓

The top photograph shows a red plastic container with a white lid, labeled '特效 風濕丸' (Special Effect Rheumatic Pills). The bottom photograph shows several red and white capsules, some with 'Jin Long' printed on them.

**‘Golden Dragon Linzi Dong Mai Dan’**



## **ANNEX B**

### **I. Information on the potent medicinal ingredients found in the adulterated health products that should only be prescribed by a doctor**

#### **Betamethasone and dexamethasone**

Betamethasone and dexamethasone are corticosteroids used for inflammatory conditions and should only be used under strict medical supervision. Long term unsupervised use of oral corticosteroids can cause increased blood glucose levels leading to diabetes, high blood pressure, cataracts, muscular and bone disorders, an increased risk of infections and Cushing's syndrome, which is characterised by a round face or 'moon face', and upper body obesity with thin limbs.

#### **Furosemide**

Furosemide is a potent diuretic drug that is used to eliminate water and salt from the body. Excessive 'water-eliminating' effect of furosemide can cause the depletion of sodium, chloride, body water and other minerals in the body.

#### **Oxethazaine**

Oxethazaine is a local anaesthetic that is used orally with antacids for the relief of gastro-oesophageal reflux disease. Adverse effects include dizziness and hypersensitivity reactions.

#### **Piroxicam**

Piroxicam is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) used to treat pain and inflammation in the body and should only be used under strict medical supervision. It can cause gastrointestinal adverse effects such as nausea, vomiting and gastric bleeding. NSAIDs may be associated with cardiovascular events (e.g. heart attack and stroke), especially when used at high doses for long-term treatment. All NSAIDs should be prescribed at the lowest effective dose and the duration of treatment should be periodically reviewed by a doctor and kept as short as possible.

Advisory on NSAIDs and cardiovascular risk can be found at the following link: [http://www.hsa.gov.sg/publish/hsaportal/en/health\\_products\\_regulation/safety\\_information/product\\_safety\\_alerts/safety\\_alerts\\_2007/Non-selective\\_NSAIDs\\_.html](http://www.hsa.gov.sg/publish/hsaportal/en/health_products_regulation/safety_information/product_safety_alerts/safety_alerts_2007/Non-selective_NSAIDs_.html)

### **II. Other medicinal ingredients:**

#### **Paracetamol**

Paracetamol is available over the counter for the relief of fever and pain. Rare adverse effects include hypersensitivity reactions such as rash.