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Emergency Departments, Urgent Care Centres & Department of Psychiatry of Public Healthcare Institutions

National Addictions Management Services Centre in Institute of Mental Health

The Minister for Health has earlier announced that in the coming weeks, etomidate will be classified as a Class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA). In view of this latest development, MOH/HSA would like to provide clarification through a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the joint MOH Circular No. 39/2025 and HSA Circular No 01/2025.

2 MOH will be issuing a new circular to update our healthcare institutions on the new measures and the actions to be taken ahead of the classification of etomidate as a controlled drug in the coming weeks.

3 In the meantime, all medical practitioners in the emergency departments, urgent care centres or addiction centre should continue to manage such patients who step forward to be managed symptomatically for their etomidate abuse and support them weaning off the abuse, and to record all medical consultation to manage etomidate-related adverse events in the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system accordingly. For now until etomidate is classified as a Class C Controlled Drug, there is no need to collect vapes or conduct urine testing unless the patient consents to do so voluntarily.

4 Please see below for a set of FAQs that has been prepared.

Q1. What is the purpose of collecting the vapes / pods from the patients?

A1. Vaping and possession of vapes is illegal, and this is an opportunity for the patient to surrender their vapes. As informed by the Minister for Health on 20 July 2025, MOH is working with MHA to list etomidate as a Class C drug under the MDA in a few weeks' time. This is an interim measure to stem the rise of etomidate e-vaporisers.

Q2. Can the patients surrender their vapes and remain anonymous?

A2. As per the working instructions on surrender of e-vaporisers attached to the Circular, institutions can assist patients who wish to surrender their e-vaporisers voluntarily by submitting this through FormSG (indicate patient as anonymous). HSA officers will collect the surrendered vapes within 1 week of notification, verify the items against the submitted information, and provide acknowledgement slips.

Q3. Why is urine test conducted and who is paying for the urine test?

A3. Urine test can be conducted upon patient's consent and agreement to pay for it. The result obtained is for patient clinical management; and also for our surveillance/monitoring purposes. Since the test is taken upon patient's consent and payment, doctors should inform patients about the results and for their further patient management.

Q4. Are there any legal implications to my patients or me if his/her urine test results test positive for other controlled drugs?

A4. While etomidate has yet to be listed as a controlled drug, for etomidate, HSA's urine testing is for surveillance purpose and only reports on the presence or absence of etomidate only. During this period, no enforcement actions will be taken against your patient for etomidate use.

However, once etomidate is classified as a controlled drug, doctors must notify the Central Narcotics Bureau and the Director-General of Health if their patient is suspected to be consuming controlled drugs as required under the MDA.

A new circular will be issued on the enhanced measures under MDA in a few weeks' time.

Q5. How do I report adverse events suspected to be associated with the use of etomidate e-vaporisers in my patients? What if my hospital does not carry the SNOMED code for reporting this?

A5. Record all suspected/confirmed etomidate vaping cases in your EMR as follows:

a) For systems that use SNOMED Concept ID (applicable to most GP CMSes)
   Etomidate adverse reaction (disorder) - 292164000
b) For systems that use SNOMED Description ID (applicable to Singhealth SCM EMR):
   Etomidate adverse reaction - 686917012 or 432288012 or
   Adverse reaction to etomidate – 2164319011
c) For NGEMR (Using NGEMR Ext ID):
   Adverse Effect of Etomidate - 1308723

If the above SNOMED codes are not available, please report the adverse event using HSA's adverse event reporting forms:

d) Online reporting form:

https://go.gov.sg/hsa-adverse-event-online-form

e) Mobile friendly FormSG reporting form

https://go.gov.sg/hsa-adverse-reporting-healthcare-professional

Please indicate "Etomidate in vape" in the "Suspected Product" section.

Q6. Will there be any enforcement actions taken against those patients who voluntarily step forward to seek medical treatment for their e-vaporiser usage?

A6. Enforcement actions will not be taken against these patients for doing so.

A new circular will be issued on the enhanced measures under MDA in a few weeks' time.