

Our ref : HA 441/119
Your ref : HAB/CR/1/34/41 Pt 9

6 December, 2001

Secretary for Home Affairs
(Attn : Mr Wong Hiu Kwan)
Home Affairs Bureau
Southorn Centre
Wanchai
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Wong,

**Outstanding Issues arising from Meeting on 5 July 2001 of
LegCo Panel on Home Affairs Subcommittee to
Study Discrimination on the Ground of Sexual Orientation**

I refer to your letter dated 30 November 2001 and would like to provide the information requested as follows:

- (b) Further information on the academic aspect of the use of electro-convulsive treatment to cure homosexuality

Homosexuality is not regarded as a disease and is excluded as a diagnosable abnormal condition since 1973. Homosexuality is viewed instead as an alternative life style rather than a pathological disease. We are not aware of any studies in Hong Kong to confirm if homosexuality as a sexual orientation would be changed through treatment. However, a review of the literature in psychiatry revealed that in the 1960s and 1970s, behavior therapy, in the form of covert sensitization, was applied to homosexual men. Nevertheless many of the treatments were considered ethically dubious and there has been no randomized trial of this approach in homosexuals. Some of the treatments had unfortunate consequences and the long term outcomes were not encouraging. In short, there is little scientific evidence to support to the efficacy of treatments designed change sexual orientation.

(Cont'd next page)

- (c) Information on the Hospital Authority's work in enhancing the awareness of the need to respect patients' right and feeling

The Hospital Authority conducts various types of workshops and training programmes to enhance the awareness of staff to respect patients' right and feeling. One of the workshops attended by doctors is the Patient-centred Communication Skills Workshop, which emphasizes on respect, empathy and 2-way communication between doctors and patients.

All the training programmes and workshops will emphasize the importance of respecting others' rights and feelings.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr W M Ko)
Director (Professional Services & Public Affairs)
Hospital Authority

WMK/MT/rc