

**For information
on 5 November 2002**

**Legislative Council
Panel on Security**

**Inquiry into the Death of
Inmate Mr. CHEUNG Chi-kin in
Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre on
19 November 2001**

Purpose

This paper gives a brief account of the case of the death of Inmate Mr. CHEUNG Chi-kin (the deceased) at Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre (SLPC) on the early morning of 19 November 2001 as heard by the Coroner's Court, and the follow-up actions to be taken by the Administration on the return of an open verdict with two recommendations by the Coroner's Court on 11 October 2002.

Background

2. The deceased was convicted of "Possession of Dangerous Drugs" on 14 November 2001 and was remanded in Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre (LCKRC) pending a suitability report for treatment in a drug addiction treatment centre. He gave an addiction history on heroin by injection since 1991, and claimed to have been on methadone treatment since 1998.

3. On 16 November 2001, while remanded in LCKRC, the deceased claimed to have ingested about 100 ml shampoo and was sent to Queen Elizabeth Hospital where he was treated. He was subsequently discharged back to LCKRC on 17 November 2001. Later on the same day, the deceased was transferred to SLPC for mental assessment and management as recommended by the medical officer.

4. Upon his transfer to SLPC, the deceased was located singly in

Room No.4 of the Observation Unit of Admission Ward (previously known as the Acute Disturbed Unit) to receive medication and treatment prescribed by the medical officer thereat. The only physical complaint that the prisoner had made was one of epigastric pain.

5. At about 0525 hours on 19 November 2001, the prisoner was observed by the ward patrol staff to have no respiratory movement inside the room. First aid treatment was applied to the prisoner by staff responding to the scene. At 0600 hours, the prisoner was sent to A&E Department of Tuen Mun Hospital for emergency treatment. At 0645 hours, the prisoner was certified dead by a doctor there.

Death Inquest and Findings

6. A death inquest with a five-member Jury concerning the deceased was held from 3 – 11 October 2002. In conclusion, the Coroner's Court returned an open verdict with two recommendations, namely, (1) to improve its medicine prescription forms, listing consumed and yet to be consumed medicine; and (2) to improve the closed circuit television (CCTV) and recording systems.

Members' Concerns

7. Members have expressed concern about the death of the deceased and the protection of personal safety of inmates in the custody of CSD, and have requested the following information -

- (a) the guidelines and procedures for the administration of sedatives to inmates;
- (b) the patrolling system of cells; and
- (c) the guidelines and procedures for monitoring the CCTV systems installed in inmate cells, and the recording and keeping of the CCTV tapes.

Background Information concerning Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre (SLPC)

8. SLPC is a purpose-built maximum-security institution completed in 1972. It is made up by a complex of five blocks that included therapeutic, accommodation, dining, recreational and hospital/treatment facilities for 270 inmates. In brief, SLPC serves the following purposes :-

- (a) for custody of convicted prisoners/remands;
- (b) for observation, treatment or assessment of –
 - (i) persons remanded in custody for psychiatric report(s);
 - (ii) prisoners/inmates/detainees who are mentally ill;
 - (iii) prisoners/inmates for whom a psychiatric report is required by various prison sentences review/assessment boards; and
 - (iv) inmates serving Hospital Orders.

As at 21 October 2002, there were 231 inmates.

Staffing

9. A Senior Superintendent is responsible for the administration and management of the Centre. He is assisted by a Superintendent and other supporting staff including a Medical Officer, Occupational Therapist, Clinical Psychologists, Visiting Psychiatrists and Officers with nursing qualifications. As at 21.10.2002, there were 214 CSD officers in the Centre, of whom 108 were Officers with psychiatric nursing qualifications.

Medical/Psychiatric Services

10. Medical service is provided by a full time resident Medical Officer

from the Department of Health. A team of six visiting Forensic Psychiatrists from the Hospital Authority assisted by the CSD nursing officers provide psychiatric services for the inmates.

Admission of Inmates for Observation, Treatment or Assessment

11. Inmates newly admitted for observation and treatment in SLPC are placed under the care of the Observation Unit of Admission Ward. There are twenty rooms and a Day Room in the Ward. All rooms are air-conditioned, and eight of them are provided with CCTV for maintaining close surveillance of the inmates.

12. Amongst the rooms, Rooms No.1 to 4 are designated to receive the comparatively unstable and unpredictable inmates who display emotional fluctuation, overt signs of depression, suicidal ideation, self-harm tendency etc. The remainder are designated to accommodate the mentally disturbed inmates who require intensive psychiatric nursing care, or those who display violence.

13. Inmates admitted to the Unit will be intensively observed for a normal period of 2 to 4 days, according to the stability of their mental conditions. The Admission Ward-in-charge takes charge of the Observation Unit. He is assisted by a Ward Assistant and a few junior staff. Both the Ward-in-charge and the Ward Assistant are qualified psychiatric nursing staff of CSD. (A copy of the layout plan of the Observation Unit of Admission Ward is at Appendix for reference.)

The guidelines and procedures for the administration of sedatives to inmates

14. It is stipulated in the Head of Institution's order that all medication (including sedatives, oral or injection) must be prescribed by a Medical Practitioner. They can be either a Medical Officer of the Department of Health or a Visiting Psychiatrist of the Hospital Authority.

15. Sedative is administered to inmates in the form of oral medication or injection by qualified nursing officers according to prescription.

16. When sedative is administered via injection, the qualified nursing officer must personally check the Dispensary Sheet to ensure that the prescription is up-to-date and valid and that a syringe/needle of the correct size and type is used.

17. After every injection the administering staff must make an entry in the Injection Record showing the Date, Time, Name of Drugs, Dosage, Route of Injection, and the balance of the drug.

18. The fact of the injection is also recorded in the Injection Chart which is attached to the Medical History of each patient. In addition, the reason for the injection, the dosage, the route of injection, the name of the drugs and the time of administration are recorded in the Ward Report Book. The reason of injection can also be noted in the patient's Medical History for doctor's reference and attention. All records are monitored by the Senior Officers of the Centre.

19. The qualified nursing officer will observe the condition of the patient, and any critical drug reaction or signs and symptoms of hypersensitivity will be reported to the Medical Officer/Psychiatrist without delay.

The patrolling system of cells

20. In SLPC, every Ward where prisoners are located at night is manned by a Ward Patrol Officer. For the Observation Unit of Admission Ward, the Ward Patrol Officer is assisted by a Ward Patrol Assistant in view of the unpredictability of the inmates.

21. It is the primary duty of the Ward Patrol Officer to patrol the Ward and the prisoners thereat, and to report any irregularity detected, at 15 minutes intervals. The patrolling frequency is recorded by the pegging of the servis recorders located at different locations inside the Ward. For the Observation Unit of Admission Ward, the Ward Patrol Officer can maintain close surveillance of inmates by a CCTV system that screens the eight special rooms in sequence when occupied.

22. Inmates who are considered in need of special and constant supervision by reasons of marked depression or emotional problems will be recommended by the Medical Officer or the Psychiatrist to be put on a Medical Observation List. This is a special system to alert the staff to pay particular attention to certain inmates for medical reasons. Inmates on the list will be visited at 15 minutes' intervals by the Ward Patrol Officer for the detection of any abnormality.

23. Every Ward Patrol Officer is visited by the Night Orderly Officer of the centre at hourly intervals to ensure his alertness and correctness throughout the shift of duties.

24. On top of the regular patrolling system, Senior Officers of SLPC are required by law to pay unannounced night visits at least twice a fortnight to the Centre and every Ward in it.

The guidelines and procedures for monitoring the closed circuit television (CCTV) systems installed in inmate cells and the recording and keeping of the CCTV tapes

25. Eight out of the twenty rooms in the Observation Unit of Admission Ward of SLPC are provided with CCTV cameras for maintaining close surveillance of the inmates. Of these eight rooms, four are designated to accommodate the comparatively unstable and unpredictable inmates who display emotional fluctuation, overt signs of depression, suicidal ideation, self-harm tendency etc. The four others are for the acute disturbed inmates who require protection for their own safety as well as the others.

26. The eight CCTV cameras are linked to two different systems. Primarily, the camera images appear on a dedicated monitor and are monitored by the Ward Patrol of the Ward. This system operates independently to screen the occupied cells in sequence cyclically, and video recording is provided to record the images captured on screen.

27. The eight CCTV cameras are also linked to the main CCTV system of E Block where the Admission Ward is located. Images of altogether 63

cameras (including the eight in the Observation Unit) appear on the screen of two 20" monitors, largely by sequential screening, at the Control Room manned by a member of staff. Images of selected cameras can be set to appear on the screen of six 8" monitors for independent monitoring, and these six small monitors are usually reserved for observing the occupied cells of the Observation Unit of Admission Ward. Video recording is also provided to record the captured sequential images from the 63 cameras .

28. All recorded tapes are kept for 14 days and reused afterwards. Tapes of importance are preserved by the Senior Officers under seal as evidence for follow-up action.

Follow-up Action

29. In the light of the findings and recommendations of the Coroner's Court, a special task group headed by the Deputy Commissioner, with two non-official Justices of Peace included as members, has been appointed to conduct a detailed study into the circumstances surrounding the case with a view to enhancing the quality of service at SLPC. The terms of reference of the task group are -

- (a) to study the overall management of SLPC and to consider if the existing medical and nursing staff arrangements would meet the best interest of psychiatric service at SLPC;
- (b) to study the existing nursing practices and procedures in the requisition, receipt, storage, control, prescription, issue and disposal of medical drugs in institutions and the overall monitoring mechanism;
- (c) to refine the existing dispensary sheet in use in SLPC;
- (d) to review the existing CCTV monitoring system and related procedural guidelines;
- (e) to examine and identify any inadequacy in nursing/supervisory

procedures in relation to the death of the deceased inmate; and

- (f) to make recommendations wherever necessary.

30. A project for the improvement of the CCTV system of SLPC is underway. Funds were approved in 1997/98. Builder's work has by now been completed and the installation of cameras has commenced. The installation covering the twenty cells in the Observation Unit of Admission Ward is scheduled to be completed by February 2003, with the remainder by the end of 2003. On completion, the new CCTV system will provide round-the-clock digital monitoring of all the cameras. It will also provide recording of images retainable for 14 days.

Correctional Services Department
November 2002

Observation Unit of Admission Ward, SLPC
(2/fl., Block E)

小欖精神病治療中心接收症室的觀察組
(E座二樓)

