

News in Brief

Editorial Staff

FDA Issues Warning on Herbal Products

The Food and Drug Administration has issued a warning against five brands of Chinese herbal products that could pose a danger to diabetic patients. According to the FDA, the products illegally contain prescription drugs that could cause significant drops in a person's blood sugar level.

The products listed by the FDA are:

Diabetes Hypoglycose Capsules;
Pearl Hypoglycemic Capsules;
Tongyitang Diabetes Angel Pearl Hypoglycemic Capsules;
Tongyitang Diabetes Angel Hypoglycemic Capsules;
Zhen Qi Capsules.

The capsules are sold by Chinese Angel Health Products of Santa Monica, California and Sino American Health Products of Torrance, California. Both companies have agreed to recall the products, which may be returned to the place of purchase for a refund.

The federal warning was issued after a diabetic patient in northern California experienced several episodes of hypoglycemia after consuming one of the products. While the products' packaging claims that they contain only natural Chinese herbs, state health officials discovered they contained glyburide and phenformin, prescription drugs used to treat diabetes.

"People with diabetes should avoid these products and consult their physician if they've been taking them," the FDA stated. The administration also recommended that patients currently taking the herbs in conjunction with other diabetes medications, or people who suffer fatigue, excessive hunger, profuse sweating or numbness after taking the herbs, should contact their doctor immediately. As we go to press, the FDA has halted imports of the capsules into the U.S. and is in the process of having them removed from sale. The administration is investigating how the drugs were added to the herbs and whether any other products may have been similarly contaminated.

Acupuncture Helps Keep Baseball Star in Shape

1999 was perhaps the most gratifying season of David Cone's career. A pitcher with the New York Yankees, Cone led the club in earned run average and strikeouts and finished fourth on the team with 12 wins. He was also named to the American League's All-Star team, and played a vital role in the Yankees winning their third World Series title in the past four years.

One reason for Cone's success could be the acupuncture treatment he received last season. After undergoing surgery to repair an aneurysm in 1996 and shoulder surgery in 1997, he began looking for other ways to stay healthy and turned to acupuncture during spring training.

"Last spring, I did it almost every day," Cone said. "This year I've felt great, but I just wanted to get into the routine again and keep it going because I'm sure I will need it somewhere down the line here."

Cone is not the only high-profile athlete to begin using acupuncture. St. Louis Cardinals slugger Mark McGwire and Pittsburgh Penguins hockey star Jaromir Jagr have also utilized it for back pain, and a number of track and field athletes have employed acupuncture for chronic hamstring problems.

Although he has pitched without pain so far, Cone plans on continuing treatment throughout the season. "It's something I plan on maintaining throughout the year," he said. "Once a week, twice a month, unless I get in trouble and something on my body starts to hurt."

Beijing to Host TCM Congress

The World Health Organization, in cooperation with a half-dozen Chinese health administrations, will sponsor an international congress on traditional Chinese medicine in Beijing this April. The congress, titled "Development and Application of Traditional Medicine in the 21st Century," will be attended by health experts from the U.S., Europe and Asia, and will present an exchange of information on scientific research, education, clinical treatment and regulatory issues.

For more information on the congress, contact Dr. Robins Zhang by phone (510-527-7608), fax (510-527-7927), or visit the congress' website at www.ictm2000.com.

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