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**Proper Use of Respiratory Therapy Equipment**

Dear Doctor,

We would like to provide you with some advice for patients concerning the proper use of respiratory therapy equipment.

During the investigation of a case of Legionnaires' disease this month, we noted that the patient (who had multiple medical illnesses) had used a respiratory therapy device equipped with a humidifier before onset of symptoms. Water sample and swab taken from the humidifier bottle of this equipment yielded positive growth of *Legionella pneumophila*. Further water samples and environmental swabs investigations are pending.

In this connection, we would like to emphasize the importance of proper use and care of reusable equipment to reduce infections associated with respiratory therapy. According to the US CDC's Guidelines for Preventing Health-Care-Associated Pneumonia and the Fact Sheet on Legionnaires' disease issued by Hospital Authority, only sterile water is recommended to be used to fill the reservoirs of the respiratory devices for patient use (for example, bubbling humidifier and nebulizer). Sterile water is also preferable for rinsing nebulization devices and other semicritical respiratory-care equipment after they have been cleaned or disinfected. If rinsing with sterile water is not feasible, rinse the device with filtered water or tap water and then rinse with isopropyl alcohol and dry with forced air or in a drying cabinet.

Please be reminded that Legionnaires' disease is a statutory notifiable disease. If you encounter a suspected or confirmed Legionnaires' disease case, please report to the Central Notification Office (CENO) by fax (2477 2770) or phone (2477 2772) or via the CENO On-line website (<http://www.chp.gov.hk/ceno>). For more information on Legionnaires' disease, please visit our website at <http://www.chp.gov.hk>.

Yours sincerely,



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