

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

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### **Medical blunder linked to patient overload in Hong Kong public health care sector**

Consultation times down to six minutes per doctor amid shortage, groups say

Overcrowding in the public health care sector, with doctors only having a few minutes to see each patient, should partly be **blamed** for the high-profile medical **blunder** that left a mother fighting for her life.

The call came as two specialists in United Christian Hospital were revealed to have failed to prescribe **antiviral** drugs as a preventive measure to patient Tang Kwai-sze, when treating her kidney disease with steroids.

The oversight left her at risk of suffering from acute liver failure. She developed the condition later and required two urgent liver transplants, and was now still in a critical condition, requiring **artificial** lungs to breathe.

Public hospitals face a **consistent** shortage of some 250 doctors.

It emerged that two specialists at United committed the error despite an automated reminder in the system. Both doctors had ignored the **alert**.

Secretary for Food and Health Dr Ko Wing-man said the authority would now invite independent experts and those from other hospitals, as well as academics to **probe** the incident.

Dr Ng Chi-ho, president of the Public Doctors' Association, said that the public health care system was overloaded. Doctors in specialist outpatient clinics handle about 30 cases in three hours, meaning time spent on each case would only be six minutes.

A specialist in Queen Elizabeth Hospital was involved in a similar blunder between 2008 and 2009.

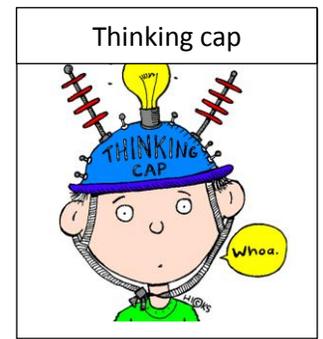
“There are many guidelines in place but the human factor will always be involved in mistakes,” Ng said.

Dr Seamus Siu Yuk-leung, chairman of the Frontline Doctors' Union, suggested that the government **subsidise** patients to receive treatment from the private sector.

Siu said more should be done in public-private partnerships to **relieve** the pressure on public systems and **divert** patients to the private market.

## Questions to think about:

- What have you learnt about Hong Kong's health care system from this article? What other issues are you aware of?
- What are some of the issues impacting on our health system given the situation with the age distribution of our population?
- What do you think should be done to resolve some of the issues?
- Would you like a job working in the medical field?



## I: Vocabulary and understanding meaning

Match the meaning and/or synonym to the words which have been highlighted in bold in the article.

Column A: Word from text	Letter	Column B: Meaning or synonym
1. blame(d) (v)		A: take the burden or weight of a problem off something or someone
2. blunder (n)		B: investigate closely
3. antiviral (n)		C: warning
4. artificial (adj)		D: support an organisation or activity financially (with money)
5. consistent (adj)		E: mistake
6. alert (n)		F: feel or declare that (someone or something) is responsible for a fault or wrong or mistake
7. probe (v)		G: acting or done in the same way over time, especially so as to be fair or accurate
8. subsidise (v)		H: not real
9. relieve (v)		I: reallocate (money or resources) to a different purpose
10. divert (v)		J: medicine, drug or treatment to fight a virus

**II: Usage of vocabulary:** Fill in the missing words of the sentences below using the vocabulary (1-10) from column A. Make sure your answers are grammatically correct. Remember you may have to change the part of speech from the one given in Part I.

1. Unfortunately, some \_\_\_\_\_ drugs or medicines to treat a patient's condition may cause other problems which cannot be predicted or foreseen.
2. The traffic \_\_\_\_\_ from the main road because of an accident. Drivers had to use an alternative route.
3. The man has an \_\_\_\_\_ leg because of a mountaineering accident when he fell. However, despite the loss of this limb, he is still manages to do many outdoor activities.
4. The authorities are conducting a (a) \_\_\_\_\_ to find out why so many (b) \_\_\_\_\_ were made in the case. The reasons for the mistakes need to be thoroughly investigated. It is still unclear who is to (c) \_\_\_\_\_ in other words, at fault for what happened.
5. Exercising is a good way of \_\_\_\_\_ pressure. It helps release endorphins that can re-energise you.
6. In Hong Kong, some people are eligible to live in \_\_\_\_\_ housing, in other words, housing which is cheaper than the market rate.
7. The student \_\_\_\_\_ gets top marks, all As. He never seems to fall below this standard.
8. Due to the police officer being very \_\_\_\_\_, in other words, quick to recognise the potential danger, a possible disaster was averted/avoided.

**ENGLISH CORNER CAFÉ IS ALWAYS OPEN ON A TUESDAY FOR DRINKS, SNACKS, CONVERSATION & GAMES**