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CARITAS MEDICAL CENTRE

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Wednesday, 22 November 2006

Attention News Editors:

The spokesman for Caritas Medical Centre (CMC) issued the following announcement today (Wednesday, 22 November 2006):

During a cataract operation performed recently in the Ophthalmology Day Surgery Centre in CMC, it was found that there was abnormality in the color indicator of the sterilization pack containing the surgical knife. Immediate investigation revealed that the knife used in the cataract operation had not completed the sterilization procedure. The instrument was discarded. A thorough review on the sterilization process was then conducted.

In general, these special instruments used in cataract operations are thoroughly cleansed and heat dried before they are packed individually for chemical sterilization. The investigation revealed that the last step in the sterilization process for 13 surgical knives which had been used in cataract operation had not been properly completed.

During the course of the investigation, 13 patients (4 male and 9 female, aged 57 to 80) who had recently received cataract operation in the Ophthalmology Day Surgery Centre from 7 to 16 November 2006 were found to be involved. They have all been contacted and called back for a detailed checking and review.

At the follow-up meetings, CMC ophthalmology doctors have explained to the patients concerned about the incident and have performed careful examination for them. No patient has any signs or symptoms of infection. All patients will be closely monitored by the Ophthalmology Team. CMC has also set up a special hotline to handle their further enquiries.

The Infection Control and Risk Management Teams of CMC will continue to follow up and analyze the event. Procedures of the sterilization process and the measures to strengthen the process are being reviewed for future improvement. In addition, staff members involved in handling the process of sterilization have been reminded to upkeep vigilance.

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