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## **CFDA: Cough Mixture Listed as Psychotropic Substances**

China's Ministry of Public Security, National Health Committee and the state FDA co-released a notice to list cough mixture into the category of psychotropic substances for regulation.

A director of Ministry of Public Security said that cough mixture contains elements that will generate illusion, and the long-term intake of cough mixture will make users become addicted to this drug.

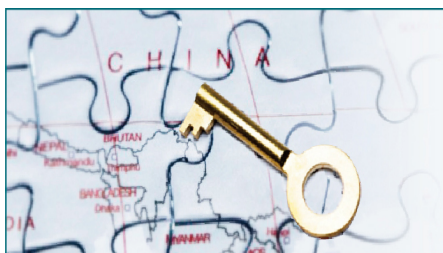
Due to cheap price and easy access, cough mixture has become a new type of addictive drug, which is increasingly pervasive among teenagers in this country. (Source: CFDA)

## **National Seminar on Food and Drug Safety Held in Beijing**

From April 27 to 28, the national seminar on food and drug regulation was held in Beijing. The seminar aimed to plan out the national food safety regulation strategy.

The national food and drug regulators emphasized that a strict standard in food and drug regulation should be built in no time. In four to five years, the standard system should apply to all pesticide and agricultural products. A comprehensive daily inspection system and spot check should be established. A product tracing system should be built. The regulator teams in grassroots should be strengthened.

Directors of all levels of food and drug authorities nationwide attended the seminar. (Source: CFDA)



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## United Family Healthcare and Cedars-Sinai Medical Center Launch US–China Healthcare Partnership

United Family Healthcare (UFH), the leading provider of private healthcare in China and Mongolia, and Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, the multi-specialty academic health science center, have announced a partnership that increases access in China to specialized clinical expertise, training, and research from the United States.

UFH and Cedars-Sinai physicians will consult on cases across the spectrum of adult and pediatric specialties, providing second opinions and an integrated referral pathway for patients requiring transfer overseas. UFH and Cedars-Sinai also will serve as rotation sites for each other's clinicians and functional area managers. The two institutions will jointly conduct conferences and symposia, selecting international research to address China's medical priorities and engaging a global audience of clinicians.



“Cedars-Sinai is excited about collaborating with United Family Healthcare. Best practices in medicine should not be limited by borders and this partnership, between two outstanding healthcare systems, will enable us to achieve the best outcomes possible for all of us” said Spencer Koerner, MD, Medical Director of the Center for International Health at CSMC.

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“Our alliance with Cedars-Sinai is a great resource for our patients and clinicians,” said Roberta Lipson, President and CEO of United Family Healthcare. “We are delighted to partner with an organization which shares our values and is a leader in medical innovation,” continued Lipson.

The collaboration ranges from real-time case management to academic discussion. “We look forward to seeing the professional relationships and exchanges between colleagues at Cedars-Sinai and UFH grow” said David Rutstein, MD, MPH, Vice President of Medical Affairs at UFH. “Each side brings a unique perspective on the needs of the patient and how optimal outcomes can be achieved.”

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center offers the newest treatments for the most serious diseases, such as cancer and heart disease, among others. Healthcare is customized to fit each patient's needs and medical condition. For Chinese patients, a personal nurse and a Chinese language interpreter are on staff to help navigate through episodes of medical care and to support the family along the way.

“Cedars-Sinai is known around the world for outstanding medical care built on decades of innovation and research,” explained Thomas M. Priselac, president and chief executive officer.

"From advanced diagnostic tests and new cancer treatments to heart transplants, brain surgery and innovative clinical trials, Cedars-Sinai has expert physicians and scientists who are leading the quest for new medical treatments." (Source: ufh.com)

## Health Authority Seeks Opinions on Adding Gold to Chinese Liquor

The National Health and Family Planning Commission, which is responsible for drafting laws and regulations for health and family planning as well as the development of Traditional Chinese Medicine, has published a statement soliciting opinions about the proposal to add gold as a food additive to baijiu, a popular Chinese liquor, according to the Beijing Times on Tuesday on its website.



Only gold leaf with a purity of 99.99 percent can be added to strong Chinese spirits, with a maximum amount of 0.02 grams, the proposal says.

Liquor with gold flakes is hardly a new phenomenon, but it has raised concerns among experts.

Mr Zhao, a liquor lover, says "the price of liquor with gold leaf is around 300 yuan (\$47.90) in some regions, while ordinary liquor sells for just dozens of yuan."

"Buying gold leaf liquor is seen as a prestigious thing, but it tastes the same," he says.

Ma Yong, vice president and general secretary of the China Food Industry Association and Liquor Professional Committee, says it doesn't make any sense to add gold leaf to liquor.

Fan Zhihong, an associate professor at the Nutrition and Food Safety department of China Agricultural University, says there are more than 20 elements essential to the human body, but gold is not one of them.

The actual amount of gold contained in a 500 gram bottle of liquor is less than 0.01 gram, which equates to little more than two yuan (\$0.3), experts say. (Source: ECNS)

## Unsafe Product Alert: Be Very, Very Careful What you Buy on WeChat

Ecommerce on WeChat, Tencent's mobile messaging service platform, has really started to take off over the past year. In fact, there are plenty of new startups like Call a Chicken that base their entire business on the chat platform.

But that doesn't mean that buying from WeChat is necessarily safe, and a recent CCTV report suggests just the opposite. After a young woman named Wen bought a facial cleansing mask on WeChat that left her face covered in pimples, a subsequent investigation found that many of the facial masks selling on WeChat came from illegal workshops using low end products and massive amounts of glucocorticosteroids. Some of the masks tested had six thousand times more of the hormones than is allowed under the law.

The masks sell because those massive hormone doses make them effective in the short-term. In the long term, however, they can lead to serious health conditions including high blood pressure.

The issue betrays a larger problem with WeChat ecommerce: at the moment, it lacks the oversight

of a traditional ecommerce platform. As one Sina commenter put it: "Taobao has fake products but at least there's platform supervision. On WeChat you just have to trust that [the seller] has a conscience. It's unreliable."



Given that the platform has just been called out for selling unsafe products on China's largest television network, though, it's likely that Tencent may begin to step in and offer stricter oversight of the products that are sold through its platform. (Source: Sina tech)

### Food Safety Experts Urge More Honesty

Food safety issues have undermined customer confidence in China in recent years, and even though conditions have improved, winning back customer trust is a challenge, a former US Food and Drug Administration official told China Daily in an exclusive interview.

"China's food safety is definitely getting better, there's no question in my mind now. China has robust standards for food," said David Acheson, founder and CEO of The Acheson Group, a food safety consulting firm, and a former FDA chief medical officer.

"But whether it means it's where we need to be,

no," he said. "Neither is the US."

In a 2014 survey on food safety, some 48 percent of respondents were unhappy with China's food safety, compared with 29.7 percent in a previous one in 2012. The Research Center for Development and Regulation of the Food and Drug Industry interviewed 4,258 people in more than 10 provinces for the survey.

Acheson said food recalls are common, even in the US, but transparency is the key to retaining public support.

Consumers want to hear a strategy for dealing with the issue and that measures are being put into place to ensure the problems get fixed and won't be repeated, said Acheson's colleague, Melanie Neumann, a food safety expert and CFO of The Acheson Group.

"Good communication helps rebuild customer confidence and company brand loyalty," she said.

Important steps in restoring customer trust include disseminating food safety knowledge and understanding the rules of food supply chains, Acheson said.

The US has a different philosophy from China with food recalls. In the US, they are seen as part of the food business and sanctions for companies are not so severe, Acheson and Neumann said.

"China seems do the exact opposite," Neumann said. "Once China has recalls, it seems they declare a total failure in the system."

She suggested the Chinese regulators do their part to define and differentiate food safety and food



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quality issues to consumers. As an example, she cited the July 2014 case of Shanghai Husi Food, a subsidiary of US OSI Group, which was found to have supplied expired meat to fast-food restaurants including McDonald's and Yum Brands in China.

"Nobody died or was sickened because of it. And that's a quality issue, but not a food safety issue," she said. "But the definition is confusing in China. I saw the top food safety cases that the government announced in China in recent years, and in my experience many of them cannot be called safety issues at all."

The Husi case is still under investigation. OSI group's operations in 11 companies in China are suspended and many workers have been laid off or are looking for new jobs.

"There is one message that I could read from the government that something bad is happening there. But what are the facts? We have no idea," Acheson said.

Customers need truth and any investigation should be quick and open to the public, Neumann said.

"Silence brings fear. It will give people time to make up terrible stories. For any company you'd better come out with your truth," she said.

Severe punishments, such as those of company executives found guilty in China, can drive a culture of fear and discourage transparency, she said.

"We need the explanation from the company of what happened and how did that happen? And practical strategies to ensure it won't happen again," she said. "And, happily, we found that increasingly Chinese companies are looking at building global standards and increasing food safety."

## Women Who go to Work Get Health Warning

China's workforce has changed rapidly over the past few decades, with the number of women who go out to work steadily rising.

Since many women continue in paid employment while juggling their responsibilities as mothers and carers, researchers are finding that work-related health problems are posing a severe threat to the professional female.



"Increasingly, females are facing various occupational diseases, some chronic and some acute," said Zhou Qinlu, a mass fitness researcher at the Beijing Institute of Sports Science, who has been focusing on female health for years.

"Most professional women, who are generally 20 to 60 years old, are troubled by health problems, including high blood pressure, high blood sugars and coronary heart disease resulting from excessive body fat," said Zhou.

Zhou said some are also struggling with menstrual disorders, a difficult menopause, sleeping disorders and even cancers due to their overworked immune systems.



In addition, almost every working woman experiences some sort of spinal problems, including pain in the back, leg, neck area or arms, while some report numbness in the arms and hands.

"It is suggested that professional women should exercise regularly, at least three times a week for no less than 30 minutes each time, consisting of both aerobic workouts and strength training," said Zhou.

According to Zhou, a study by the Women's Federation five years ago suggested that only 28.8 percent of the public consistently exercise regularly.

However, employed women get even less exercise, with only around 6 percent training regularly.

Many professional women spend most of their time sitting at a desk, which results in a sedentary lifestyle known to put them at risk of conditions including high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, certain cancers, weight gain and obesity.

"Occupational sitting increases the risk of certain conditions in women, and poor posture or a poorly designed workstation can lead to curvature of the spine," said Zhou.

"We are also witnessing cases of the pelvis becoming deformed and poor blood circulation, which directly affects fertility."

Zhou suggested that women stand up and stretch after 40 minutes of sitting at a desk, and they should encourage companies to introduce standing-up desks in offices.

"The sad thing is, recent research suggests the proportion of people leading a healthier lifestyle is barely increasing. It is still below 10 percent," she said.

"Most women, especially those in the workforce, find that work puts too much pressure on them yet deprives them of enough time for regular exercise," said Zhou.

"They spend their time in the office, or on the way to and from the office, and when they get back home they are too exhausted to do squats or core training."

Zhou has been giving advice on daily exercise and regular workouts throughout the country in the past few years, in her role as a counselor of the Women's Federation, to better promote women's health in the country.

Zhou said her research over the past few years suggests that people from first-tier cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, report even less time scheduled for workouts compared with those from less-Hangzhou.

"Professional women should take this as a warning, and not sacrifice their health too much for work," she said.



In addition to raising awareness, companies should come up with a more "workout friendly" office environment to encourage more of their female employees to take up exercise.

"We have been promoting office yoga for a long time, which does not require too much space or too many facilities," said Zhou.

"Exercise involving stretching would help female staff members to better manage their time during work, making them more efficient."

Zhang Qing, founder of sports marketing agency

Key-Solution, said proper exercise could reduce some of the hazards of the workplace, by boosting people's immune systems and enhancing their physique.

"Regular jogging and workouts can also help relieve people of possible depression, anxiety and stress disorders caused by the workplace," he said.

Juggling work and family puts additional stress on women, most of who are still mainly responsible for taking care of the young and old in China's households.

When family and work collide, professional women report mental stress, lack of sleep, fatigue and a higher chance of susceptibility to infection, said Zhou. (Source: China Daily)

## Alibaba Moves Deeper Into China Health With Web Pharmacy Merger

As Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. copes with slowing e-commerce sales growth, billionaire founder Jack Ma is expanding further into China's booming online health-care market.



Alibaba announced a \$2.5 billion deal Wednesday to bring the Internet retail giant's health-care assets under one roof, moving its Web pharmacy business into its publicly listed health arm. Ma is setting his sights on health as more Chinese seek professional care, buy wellness products and use mobile gadgets to monitor their fitness.

China is grappling with a surge in chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, and is racing to ramp up its medical infrastructure to serve an aging population. Bringing together the two operations also better prepares Alibaba, which is now limited to selling over-the-counter medicines, to move into prescription drugs sales if and when the government permits online purchases.

"This is actually one of the right pieces of the jigsaw puzzle to piece together," said Alexander Ng, a Hong Kong-based consultant at McKinsey & Co. "Having a network of logistics and also retail will complement its online dispensing services."

The move comes as Alibaba is expected to report sales growth of 45 percent for the year that ended March 31, the slowest pace since at least 2011, the earliest data available. Shares of Alibaba Health Information Technology Ltd. soared 81 percent to close at HK\$12.26 in Hong Kong trading -- the highest level in 15 years -- after the restructuring was announced Wednesday.

In a deal valued at HK\$19.4 billion (\$2.5 billion), Alibaba Health will issue shares and convertible bonds to buy Beijing Chuanyun Logistics Investment Ltd. from Ali JK Investment, a wholly owned unit of Alibaba Group, and another investor. Chuanyun Logistics had 71 million yuan (\$11.4 million) profit in the year that ended March 31, according to the stock exchange statement announcing the deal.

The deal gives Alibaba Health the exclusive right to operate the online pharmacy sales platform on Tmall, the group's business-to-consumer Web store. Alibaba Group will agree not to compete with its health arm in online pharmacy sales after the deal is done, according to the statement.

Expanded online drug sales could slowly reshape the country's \$149 billion market for prescription drugs by moving sales to Internet retailers and away from hospitals. Other technology companies such as Tencent Holdings Ltd. are also investing in online health care.

The market could balloon to 36.5 billion yuan in

2017, compared with an estimated 15.7 billion this year, according to a research report by Analysys International.

“Online and mobile health care is an area with enormous potential in China,” said Mark Natkin, Beijing-based founder and managing director of Marbridge Consulting. “You’ve got an aging population, increasing income and therefore increasing awareness on fitness and health, and a rapidly growing IT infrastructure with more and more people accessing the Internet on Web and mobile.”

Alibaba’s Tmall website features storefronts for 186 pharmacies selling over-the-counter medicines, medical devices, contact lenses, sexual health products and other general health care products, according to the statement. The parent will have majority control of the health arm after the transaction.

The fragmented supply chains for medical products in the country offer opportunities for growth, Alibaba Health said in the statement.

The group would be well-placed to start online prescription drug sales should the opportunity arise, it said.

Alibaba’s Tmall site already sells Chinese consumers everything from clothes to household items. Its payment affiliate Alipay and several Chinese hospitals allow patients to make doctors’ appointments, pay medical bills and receive diagnostic results using their mobile phones, according a July report by Alizila, the group’s news site.

“Alibaba is particularly well positioned to bring greater efficiency to the health care industry, in terms of product sourcing, tracking the supply chain and offering greater transparency on pricing,” Natkin said. (Source: Bloomberg)

China Updates is published weekly by the U.S. – China Health Products Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of dietary supplements and nutritional ingredients. The association’s major focus is the continued development of China’s overall natural health product industry as well as offer business services to its global members.

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