



## MEDIA RELEASE

### AACMA RESPONSE TO ARTICLE IN 'SYDNEY MORNING HERALD'

Herbal remedies can kill: pathologist (**8 February 2010**)

An article in 'the Sydney Morning Herald' reported that "There's a false perception that herbal remedies are safer than manufactured medicines, when in fact many contain potentially lethal concentrations of arsenic, mercury and lead".

This is irresponsible and sensationalised reporting at its worst.

#### **(1) Misleading readers**

Your paper misleads readers to believe that 251 Asian herbal products found in stores across the US and he found arsenic in 36 of them, mercury in 35 and lead in 24 of the products.

There is no mention in your article that there currently is little or no regulation regarding herbal medicine in North America.

#### **(2) A biased view**

It would have been better if your paper has sourced comments from qualified Traditional Chinese Medicine professionals in Australia to provide a balanced view.

Manufactured Chinese herbal medicine products imported into or sold in Australia are regulated by the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration. Consumers should always look for the Therapeutic Goods Administration "AUST L" or "AUST R" number printed on the front of complementary medicine packaging.

Individual Chinese herbal medicines are less regulated but are covered by various standards including food, customs and quarantine standards. Potentially toxic herbs are regulated under state drugs and poisons scheduling.

AACMA reassures the many people who are receiving Chinese herbal medicine treatments that it is safe and effective when prescribed and dispensed by a qualified Chinese medicine practitioner.

Members of the public can locate a qualified AACMA accredited Chinese medicine herbalist by contacting the AACMA National Practitioner Referral Service (1300 725 334) or via the Find a Practitioner service at [www.acupuncture.org.au](http://www.acupuncture.org.au).

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