



MEDIA RELEASE

AACMA RESPONSE TO SEGMENT IN 'THE 7.30 REPORT'

How safe are herbal medicines? (24 February 2010)

<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2010/s2829395.htm>

The television segment on 'The 7.30 Report' (ABC) reported on *How safe are herbal medicines?*

The segment failed to highlight that the references to unsafe medicines (such as contaminated or adulterated product) were about medicines obtained overseas where the regulatory systems for complementary medicines are less rigorous or non-existent. Australia has the world's most rigorous system of regulation of complementary medicines and those types of products cannot be legally imported or supplied in Australia.

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.

AACMA warns about the dangers of self-diagnosis and self-administration of therapeutic products and stresses the importance of seeking advice from a qualified practitioner before taking any over the counter herbal product. Furthermore, the use of concentrated dosages of single ingredients is generally not recommended in Chinese herbal medicine.

"In relation to Chinese herbs, consumers should seek professional advice from an accredited Chinese medicine practitioner who is qualified to prescribe and dispense Chinese herbal medicines", says Judy James, CEO of the Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association Ltd.

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.

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