



Register
of Chinese
Herbal Medicine

Code of Ethics

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Rule One

MEMBERS SHALL AT ALL TIMES CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN AN HONOURABLE MANNER IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR PATIENTS, THE PUBLIC, AND WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE REGISTER.

A. Members' obligations to their patients

The relationship between a Chinese herbalist and his or her patient is that of a professional with a client. The patient puts complete trust in the practitioner's integrity, and it is the duty of members not to abuse this trust in any way. Proper moral conduct must always be paramount in Members' relationships with patients. Members must act with consideration concerning fees and justification for treatment.

Members must take care when explaining the procedures and treatment which they propose to administer and should recognise the patient's right to refuse treatment or ignore advice.

Members must take care to see that their practices are managed with due diligence, in particular, delegation of professional duties should be made only in favour of those qualified to accept them.

It is desirable that if he or she is away from the practice for any length of time, the member should ensure that adequate arrangements are made to enable patients to receive treatment.

Members have an implicit duty, within the law, to keep all information concerning and views formed about patients entirely confidential between the member and the patient concerned. This same level of confidence must be maintained by assistants and receptionists when these are employed. Even the fact of a patient's attendance at a member's practice should be considered confidential and should not be disclosed to a third party without the patient's consent.

Members are warned not to assume that details of a wife's or husband's case should be freely discussed with the other. The above ruling applies to all parties including next of kin and members should never allow a third person to be present unless with the express consent of the patient.

Disclosure of any confidential information to a third person is only in order when all the following requirements are met:

- Disclosure is in the patient's interest.
- It is done with the patient's knowledge and consent (except when the patient is not in a condition to give this and a third person is in a position to be responsible for the patient's interests).
- There is a real need for such information to be imparted, such as when a member considers a case should be referred to a colleague.

Members must ensure that they keep clear and comprehensive records of the treatment they administer to patients.

Members must ensure that a notice of all consultation fees is clearly displayed in the clinic waiting room, or in another suitable location where it will be seen by patients, or that patients are otherwise

informed by information sheets made available to them, prior to the first consultation. It is desirable that this notice should also give guidance as to the range of likely costs of herbal prescriptions per day or per week.

B. Members' obligations to the public

B.1. Disclosure of information

The medical professions in this country do not enjoy professional privilege ie. disclosure of communications between patient and practitioner may be required by Courts of Law. If a Member is asked in a Court of Law to disclose information which he or she considers confidential, the Member should ask the Court to take into consideration his or her reasons for not wishing to divulge the information required, ie. on the grounds of professional propriety. If such a contention is nevertheless overruled by the Court, the Member may be in contempt of court by refusing to divulge the information required. Such a refusal will not cause the Member to be considered as acting in breach of this Code of Ethics. At the same time, compliance with such a requirement is the only clear exception to the principle of confidentiality laid down in A above.

B.2. Use of the title 'Doctor'

No member may use the title 'Doctor' either directly or indirectly in such a way as to imply that he or she is a registered medical practitioner, unless this be the case.

C. Members' obligations to other practitioners

C.1. Transfer of a patient

Action taken by a member to persuade the patient of another practitioner or of his principal (if he or she is employed as an assistant), or of a clinic in which he or she may be working, to patronise him or her is in all circumstances unethical and contravenes this Code of Ethics. In consequence it is advisable that members should apply a clear and proper procedure when exchanging or referring patients or dealing with the patients of other practitioners.

When a member treats a patient of another practitioner (referred by the other or not) due to holidays, illness, or any other reason, the member shall consider himself or herself to be under an obligation to encourage the patient to return to the original practitioner as soon as that practitioner can accept them back for treatment, and to inform the original practitioner as to which patients have been treated and the treatment that has been given. In the same way, when a patient attends a second practitioner because the original practitioner has for any reason neglected to refer them or give them advice on where to go, the obligation on the second practitioner still remains the same. An exception to this may be if the original practitioner indicates that he or she wishes otherwise.

In all cases the decision whether or not to return to the original practitioner rests solely with the patient no attempt must be made by either practitioner to persuade the patient to remain with, or return to, him or her.

Where a patient transfers to another practitioner for any reason, eg. change of location, all possible help should be afforded to the second practitioner if requested. The Council of the Register would not wish to lay down specific rules as to what information about the patient should be forwarded to

the second practitioner. The determining factor should be the interests of the patient, and his or her consent to pass on information given by them in confidence should always be obtained.

C.2. Denigration

No matter how justified a practitioner may feel in holding critical views of a colleague's competence or behaviour, it is unprofessional and would be considered unethical that he or she should communicate such an opinion to a third party. Not only might such criticisms be considered unjustified or slanderous but it is contrary to good practice that the confidence of the public should be undermined because of personally held views.

A member to whom criticisms of a colleague's competence are communicated, whether or not he or she be a member of the Register, should at all times act with discretion and should himself express no opinion. An exception to this is when a member needs to refer a complaint to the Council of the Register.

Rule Two

NO MEMBER MAY ADVERTISE OR ALLOW HIS OR HER NAME TO BE ADVERTISED IN ANY WAY, EXCEPT IN THE FORM LAID DOWN BY THE COUNCIL OF THE REGISTER.

Any form of commercialism in the conduct of a herbal practice is unseemly and undesirable. Particular considerations are listed below.

A. Commencement of practice

Some discreet publicity for herbal medicine is allowed to assist a new member starting in practice as, and the public seeking the services of, a qualified Chinese herbalist. A member may make a commencement of practice announcement in his or her local newspaper only when he or she has submitted a copy of the proposed announcement, in the format laid down below, to the Secretary of the Register and has obtained his or her written approval of the advertisement. The format will be:

**THE REGISTER OF
CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE**
announces that Mr/Mrs/Ms
.....
a qualified member of the Register,
has commenced practice at
.....
Tel

The following rules apply and any deviation from them will render the member liable to disciplinary action:

1. No variation from the format is allowed.
2. Only REGISTER OF CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE may be in heavy type.

3. The rest of the announcement must be in light type only.
4. The announcement must be only a single column lineage advertisement and no display or semi-display advertisements may be used.
5. It is the responsibility of the member to see that the newspaper has the correct format and instructions by putting this in writing and obtaining confirmation from the newspaper to avoid printing errors.
6. Twenty four insertions are permitted over a period of six months from commencement of practice.
7. In the case of a new group practice the same rules shall apply as for an individual practitioner, except that the name of the practice (if any) and of all its members may be included.
8. The cost of placing such announcements shall be borne by the practitioners concerned.

B. Change of address

A member who moves the address of his or her practice may insert the following advertisement in the local press:

**THE REGISTER OF
 CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE**
 announces that Mr/Mrs/Ms

 formerly practising at

 is now practising at

 Tel.....

The rules in A. above apply, except that only twelve insertions are permitted over a period of three months from the change of address.

C. Opening of additional practice(s)

A member who opens an additional practice may insert the following announcement in the local press:

**THE REGISTER OF
CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE**
announces that Mr/Mrs/Ms
.....
in practice at
.....
is now also practising at
.....
Tel.....

The rules in A. above apply, except that only twelve insertions are permitted over a period of three months from the opening of the new practice. In the case of a member opening a new practice in an area already covered by previous announcements, two announcements only are allowed.

The public are referred to individual members at their place of work, and not to clinic addresses at which a member does not practice. Therefore a member must not under any circumstance supply practice addresses to the register at which s/he does not personally practice (for instance an address of a colleague, an affiliated practitioner, or an employee), unless this person is a member of the RCHM in his or her own right.

D. Partnership/Assistantship

One public announcement, utilising the format in A. above shall be permitted in a case where:

1. A member joins an existing practice.
2. A member takes on an assistant or becomes an assistant.

E. Yellow Pages

E.1 Single Line Entries

Single Line Entries in the Yellow Pages may be arranged by any member or group of members on his/her/their own behalf. Entries will consist of no more than the practice or practitioner's name, address, telephone number, and designatory letters (where appropriate).

E.2. Block Entries

Any member or members may appear in a 'Block Entry' set out under the heading in 2 - 4 below. The following rules apply

1. All members in the area will be approached and included in the entry if they wish.
2. The entry will be headed:

MEMBER OF THE REGISTER OF CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE

Or

MEMBERS OF THE REGISTER OF CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE.

3. In the case of a single member, the rest of the entry will consist of no more than the practitioner's name, address, telephone number and designatory letters.
4. In the case of more than one member, the entry may be listed either with the members' names in alphabetical order or under towns in which they practise in alphabetical order.
5. The cost of placing such an entry shall be borne in equal parts by all the members participating in it.

E.3. Extra entries in other Directories

1. Where the premises at which practices are located in an area which is covered by two or more directories, the member may arrange for details to appear in all those directories.
2. Where the premises at which a member practises are located in an area which is close to the boundary of an area or areas covered by another directory or directories, the member may arrange for details to appear in the directory or directories for that area or areas.

E.4. Extra entries in the same directory

1. Any member who is not the telephone subscriber but is a member of a partnership or group practice sharing the same premises and telephone, may arrange for his or her name to appear in the same directory or directories as the partnership or group practice.
2. No details of any assistant may appear in the directory without the permission of his or her principal.

F. British Telecom Directory entries

The same rules apply as for Yellow Pages entries described in D. above.

G. Other directory entries

The existence today of many directories issued by newspapers, commercial enterprises, town halls, etc makes it impossible to lay down rigid rules over entries therein.

In general the Register has no objection to the details of a member appearing in such Directories, even if payment is required, provided the entries comply with the rules applied to Yellow Pages.

If there is any doubt about the suitability of an entry or of any such directory, the Administrator of the Register should be consulted.

H. Door plates, signs etc

These must not be considered a form of advertisement for the practitioner and therefore must not appear to be such. Nothing more than the normal professional plate customary in the member's area of practice is permitted.

I. Letter headings, business cards etc

1. Letter headings, business cards and other stationery used must be in a strictly professional style and may show only the business or company name if used, member's names, designatory letters, address, telephone number, and if desired, 'Chinese Herbalist', 'Chinese Herbal Practitioner', 'Consultant Chinese Herbalist', or similar or other title such as 'Osteopath', 'Naturopath', etc, provided this is accurate.
2. Members are reminded that, whether or not they practise under a business name, it is a legal requirement that all partners' names must be included on all business stationery, and at the premises of the practice. Special rules apply to partnerships of more than twenty persons. Changes in partnership should be noted as soon as they occur.
3. Public display of letter headings, business cards, etc, should be in accordance with paragraph 13 of the Code of Practice.
4. Members shall display only professional certificates and diplomas which originate from bona fide organizations currently recognized by the Register and degrees conferred by recognized Universities or other such establishments.

J. Therapeutic Establishments

A member shall not display his or her name in connection with any therapeutic establishment in which he or she has an interest, unless the form and style of any such announcement has been approved in advance by the Council.

Members should be aware of the distinction between a 'group practice' (as mentioned in A.8. above) by which is meant a group of Chinese herbal practitioners working in shared premises under an individual or practice name, and a 'therapeutic establishment' by which is meant, for example, a residential clinic or multi-disciplinary practice. Members who practise in multi-disciplinary clinics are reminded that, for the purpose of advertising, these are regarded as being identical to 'group practices', and any advertising must be in accordance with the rules contained herein. Members must accept that they have a responsibility to ensure that any publicity or advertising engaged in by such a clinic, or its proprietor, is in keeping with the Aims and Objects of the Register and does not infringe this ethical Code. Members contemplating joining such a clinic should satisfy themselves that all advertising and publicity conforms to the rules contained herein. Difficulties may arise when members practise with practitioners who do not adhere to an established Code of Ethics, or where the proprietor(s) of such a clinic are not themselves bound by such a code. In such cases, members are strongly advised to consult the Council of the Register before deciding how best to proceed. (See also Rule Five, Section B, below).

K. Broadcasts, lectures, articles, etc

Members are advised to consult the Council of the Register before participating in any form of publicity in the press, or on television or radio because:

1. There is a risk that such participation might constitute advertising.

2. There may be difficulties which can be avoided only by means of expert advice. When asked for comment by a newspaper, especially a national newspaper, members should realise that they have little or no control over the published form and content, nor is there any certainty that they will be quoted in full, or in the context they intend. Similar dangers exist in edited television or radio programmes.

3. If not properly informed on the subject matter, a contributor could be responsible for the publication of incorrect information and thus be the cause of misleading information reaching the public. The Council and every member must take all steps to ensure that publicity originating from them is seemly and proper, and does not in any way damage the public image of the profession or the Register's interests.

L. Information, leaflets, literature, etc

L.1. The circulation of literature intended to educate and inform the public about the work of the Chinese herbalist, the scope of his/her services, etc., is perfectly acceptable.

The following rules apply:

1. Any reference to any individual member must be confined to his or her name, designatory letters, address and telephone number.

2. The literature offered should be of a strictly professional style or format.

3. The literature should be distributed to members of the public only at their express wish, eg. leaflets may be left in the reception area of the practice or posted at the request of an interested individual. In addition, the Council may authorise the distribution of informational literature at exhibitions, seminars, etc, in which the register is participating.

4. The use of such literature in promotional activities of any kind, eg mail shots, mass leafletting or public displays etc, is strictly forbidden.

L.2. Members may publish books, pamphlets and articles of an informative nature about Chinese herbalism and other subjects relevant to it. Such publications must however be of scientific or educational value, and must avoid matters that might be considered to be in the nature of excessive personal advertising. Members should also ensure that any publications they author do not contravene the RCHM's general position which is to strongly encourage members of the public considering using Chinese herbal medicine to seek professional advice from a qualified practitioner of Chinese herbal medicine.

The Council considers that proper consultation over publicity of any sort is of paramount importance. This will not only help to avoid the pitfalls and difficulties outlined above, but will certainly be of great assistance to the member involved in publicity and make it easier to deal successfully with it.

Advertising and relations with the media are subjects of continuous review and discussion, not only among herbalists but all the healing professions. It is therefore not possible to outline all the situations and eventualities that may arise. A member in doubt as to any of the above matters should clarify his or her position in advance with the Council.

M. Commercial Activity

Members shall not use their membership qualifications in the commercialisation of any product or remedy in connection with any retail or commercial establishment.

Rule Three

MEMBERS SHALL COMPLY AT ALL TIMES WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE.

Any member who fails to meet the requirements of the code of Practice may be held to be in breach of the Code of Ethics and may be subject to disciplinary measures on the grounds of professional misconduct (see Rule Six, Section B.2.).

Rule Four

MEMBERS SHALL NOT GIVE FORMAL COURSES OF INSTRUCTION IN THE PRACTICE OF HERBAL MEDICINE IN ANY WAY THAT MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS BEING UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE REGISTER WITHOUT THE EXPRESS APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL OF THE REGISTER

Members are not prohibited from teaching but may not teach under the auspices of the Register without the written consent of the Council.

Rule Five

IT IS REQUIRED THAT MEMBERS APPLY THE FOREGOING CODE TO ALL THEIR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES.

A. Membership of other professional organisations

Members of the register may belong to other organisations whose ethical standards differ from those of the register. Such members must accept that their dual membership does not give them any immunity from the consequences of contravening the regulations of the register whether contained in this Code of Ethics or any rules, memoranda, recommendations or advice issued by the Council of the Register for the conduct of members.

B. Members of the Register practising with non-members

Any member who has a non-member of the Register practising with him or her, or allows a non-member to practise at the same premises is warned of the risk of misleading patients directly, indirectly or by default, so as to believe that such an individual giving treatment is a member of the Register. Furthermore, the fact that such non-member(s) are practising with him or her, be they Chinese herbalists or members of other professions, does not in any way alter the application of this Code of Ethics to the activities of the member concerned.

Rule Six

Infringement of the ethical code renders members liable to disciplinary action with subsequent loss of privileges and benefits of the Register.

Professional Misconduct

A. General

A.1. Examination of Complaints

Members may be assured that all allegations made against them by individuals, whether patients or other members, will be carefully examined by the Professional Ethics Committee under the procedure outlined below. Only following such an examination might a further hearing take place, at which it is possible, inter alia, for a member to be expelled. The Ethics Committee acts impartially and its decisions depend solely on the facts and circumstances of each case.

A.2. Complaints Procedure

Complaints against a member are always investigated by the Professional Ethics Committee provided such complaints are put in writing. The procedure is then that the member is informed in writing of the complaint. The complainant's letter is acknowledged, and in all cases a copy of their letter is sent to the member concerned. A request for an explanation is made to the member, asking for a detailed explanation of their side of the matter, supported by documentary evidence where appropriate. A complaint against a member can only be upheld if the member is clearly shown to be in breach of the Ethical Code, and in all other matters it is up to the complainant, if still aggrieved, to seek redress through a Civil Action.

A.3. Guidance

If any member requires advice on a professional or ethical problem, he or she may consult the Administrator of the Register, who will refer him or her to an appropriate person or committee for advice.

A.4. Convictions

Members should be aware that the Professional Ethics Committee is obliged to accept the findings of a Court of Law, and is not able to re-open the investigation of facts which led to conviction. The Professional Ethics Committee will consider only the seriousness of the conviction and any surrounding circumstances in mitigation. Members should therefore treat with caution any encouragement to plead guilty to an offence and should take legal advice where possible.

B. Proscribed Conduct

B.1. Interpretation

It is reiterated that the interpretation of 'Proscribed Conduct' which is provided in this Code of Ethics for the purposes of the disciplinary procedure contained in the Articles of Association, is not exhaustive and is intended as guidance only.

B.2. Examples of proscribed conduct

Any member who:

1. Brings the profession into disrepute by his or her personal behaviour, eg. by being convicted of drunkenness, drug abuse or an offence of dishonesty;
2. Fails properly to care for a patient or neglects his or her practice, eg. by failing to conform with the standards laid down by the Code of Practice, or Local Authority bye-laws, or by infringing the guidelines in this Code of Ethics as to, for example, delegation of duties, or
3. Abuses his or her position of trust as a herbalist eg. by breaching a patient's confidence, or by using undue influence to obtain gifts or other benefits from a patient, shall render himself or herself liable to disciplinary procedure.

C. Personal relations between Chinese herbalists and their patients

C.1. Certain behaviour may render a member liable to prosecution under Criminal Law. Even if there is no prosecution such behaviour is likely to be treated as serious professional misconduct.

C.2. The Council is concerned mainly with the possible abuse of a Chinese herbalist's position of trust. Thus, the abuse of the patient-practitioner relationship, of the patient's trust, of professional visits to a patient's home, or of a knowledge gained in professional confidence, and the pursuing of an unprofessional relationship with either the patient or a member of his or her family, are viewed as unethical.

C.3. It is possible for patients to cause embarrassment and worry by forcing their attention on a practitioner. The Council reiterates that all allegations of professional misconduct are examined most carefully.

D. Professional Standards

A member in addition renders himself or herself liable to disciplinary procedures for any breach of this Code, as for example, if they:

1. Conducts himself or herself unethically in relation to another practitioner, eg. in relation to the transfer of a patient, or by denigrating the reputation of the other practitioner, or
2. Infringes the guidelines in this Code of Ethics as to advertising or otherwise conducts himself or herself in a manner calculated to attract patients, or to promote his or her own professional attainments.

IN CONCLUSION

It is finally reiterated that no document can cover all eventualities, and it is yet again emphasised that if in doubt the Council should be consulted.

Code of Practice

1. It is illegal for anyone not a registered medical practitioner to attempt to procure an abortion; a member must not knowingly administer an abortifacient or known uterine muscle stimulant remedies to a pregnant patient (in terms of Chinese Medicine, this should be taken as meaning any herb that is stated to be contraindicated in pregnancy), nor use any instruments for the purpose of procuring an abortion, nor assist in any illegal operation.

2. It is required that any intimate examinations on a patient of the opposite sex be conducted in the presence of a relative of the patient or a suitable assistant.

An 'intimate' examination includes any examination that requires undergarments to be removed; disposable plastic gloves must be worn in any such examination and any instruments used must be disposed of or adequately sterilized after use.

3. A member must not treat nor prescribe any remedy for gonorrhoea, syphilis, or urinary infections of a venereal nature.

4. It is the duty of the practitioner to notify the District Medical Officer regarding any disease on the current list of notifiable diseases. In cases of industrial poisoning or accident the local district branch of the Health and Safety Executive should be notified.

Current notifiable diseases are smallpox, cholera, diphtheria, scarlet fever, typhus, typhoid, paratyphoid, plague, tuberculosis, acute polio-myelitis, acute encephalitis, acute meningitis, ophthalmia, neonatorum, malaria, dysentery, measles (excl. rubella), whooping cough, infective jaundice, tetanus, leptospirosis, food poisoning, yellow fever, anthrax, relapsing fever, rabies, Lassa fever, viral haemorrhagic fever, Marburg disease. Several local districts have additional lists with which the practitioner must be familiar.

5. A member must consider very carefully the implications of recommending a course of treatment contrary to the advice of the patient's registered medical practitioner or of not recommending referral to a registered medical practitioner in the case of serious disease or uncertain diagnosis. Members must be aware of their vulnerability in law on this issue and must ensure in such a case that all available information is given to the patient and that the patient makes the final decision without coercion.

6. A parent or supervising adult must be present during any treatment or examination of a child under the age of 16, or of a patient with learning disabilities.

7. The Data Protection Act means that any practitioner keeping patients' data on computer file must register under the terms of the Act.

The position of a practitioner with regard to any police or official enquiry into the affairs of a patient remain unclear but it is likely that it will be possible to claim the exemptions granted medical practitioners and refuse to divulge confidential details; any such approach must, however, be reported immediately to the Secretary of the Register.

8. A member must become familiar with the terms of the Medicines Act 1968 and subsequent statutory instruments, notably The Medicines (Retail Sale or Supply of Herbal Remedies) Order 1977. Particular care should be taken to become familiar with the statutory maximum doses for those remedies listed in Schedule III of the latter order. To comply with the terms of the Act the

practitioner must have a manufacturer's licence to authorise mixture and assembly of medicinal products. Detailed records of prescriptions and dispensing must also be kept.

9. The Medicines Act further states that to claim exemptions from the restrictions on the supply of certain herbal remedies, the practitioner should supply said remedies from premises occupied by the practitioner and able to be closed so as to exclude the public.

In practice this means for example that premises should be unconnected with any herbal or health food shop unless there are separate entrance and waiting room facilities. It is likely that further restrictions on standards of hygiene and cleanliness will emerge as the enforcement authority develops its role and the member should ensure that his or her premises are well able to meet any such standards. The Shops and Office Act already lays down minimal working conditions for any employees.

10. The Medicines Act adds that to claim the said exemptions, the person supplying the remedy 'sells or supplies it for administration to a particular person after being requested by or on behalf of that person and in that person's presence to use his own judgement as to the treatment required'. The member should avoid prescribing treatment on the basis of telephone or postal contact, although repeat prescriptions may be supplied on this basis for a limited period.

11. Care should be taken in the dispensing and labelling of medicines. All medicines should be labelled to clearly indicate the correct dosage or other directions for use (especially for those remedies subject to a statutory maximum dose), and with the name of the practitioner.

The practitioner is responsible for mistakes in dispensing and should ensure that dispensers are competent, well trained and at least 16 years of age.

12. A member should never claim verbally or in print to be able to cure any life-threatening or serious disease.

The Pharmacy and Medicines Act 1941, now repealed, specifically proscribed claims for remedies or cures for locomotor ataxia, paralysis, tuberculosis, glaucoma, epilepsy, fits, Bright's disease, cancer, cataract, and diabetes, but professional discretion should suggest even wider caution.

13. The distribution or display of letter headings, business cards or practice information should be compatible with the highest professional standards.

Direct mail shots and public display constitute unprofessional activity, but discreet display of business cards or similar in health centres or other premises where natural health services are available would be permissible. Name plates should conform with professional standards and should not exceed 900 square centimetres in size.

Members are reminded that this Code of Practice represents minimally accepted standards of legal and ethical conduct in the United Kingdom at the present time. The primary reason for adhering to them is the well-being of the patient and the public. Failure to observe the Code however renders a member liable to disciplinary procedures under the terms of Rule Three of the Register's Code of Ethics. Moreover, in many cases he or she will be open to criminal prosecution or claims for damages in the civil courts and it is also possible that professional indemnity insurance cover would be threatened.

14. Members must be fully aware of the law restricting the importation and use of animal and plant products from endangered species.

15. Members must not prescribe any product containing prescription-only drugs unless he or she is a medical practitioner registered with the UK General Medical Council. Contravention of this rule constitutes the serious criminal offence of prescribing medicines without a licence.

16. No member may prescribe a product containing prescription-only drugs unless he or she is a medical practitioner registered with the UK General Medical Council. Contravention of this rule constitutes the serious criminal offence of prescribing medicines without a licence.

17. Practitioners should clearly explain to their patients, both verbally and in writing, that if they experience adverse symptoms after taking the herbs, they should stop taking the herbs and consult the herbalist. This explanation should include reference to symptoms which may be associated with an adverse liver reaction, though there is no need to discuss pathology with the patient beyond enumerating relevant symptoms.

Practitioners should discuss in advance with the patient both the cost of the consultation and the price of the herbs. This will help to eliminate any misunderstandings or complaints.

Practitioners should be aware of the legal obligations with regard to animal products. Members will receive a list of endangered species and other restricted substances.

Practitioners must be fully aware of the current Restricted Substances List issued by the RCHM.

Safety Guidelines

The practitioner should always enquire from their suppliers if they have appropriate pharmacognosy measures in place in order to prevent misidentification of herbs, since serious poisonings have been caused in Europe and Hong Kong by inadequate authentication. The use of poorly documented herbs should be avoided.

All herbs should be taken at least one hour apart from taking allopathic drugs.

All patients should be monitored carefully. It is recommended that patients be seen at least once a month, and more frequently at first. Under the 1968 Medicines Act patients must be seen at least once if herbs are prescribed. Ensure that any negative changes in the person's condition are acted upon.