

Preface

First released in October 2003, the Protocol on Screening and Assessment for Poly-drug Abusers is a tool for frontline workers to facilitate early and proper assessment of poly-drug abusers and their referral to appropriate treatment service. The protocol was very well received by anti-drug workers and professionals who also provided valuable comments to improving it.

Heeding their views, the Narcotics Division decided in 2005 to invite the multi-disciplinary research team, comprising Dr. Leung Shung-pun and Dr. Wong Chee-wing from the Hospital Authority, Ms. Cherry Lee from the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers, and Ms. Annissa Lui from the Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service, to revise and refine the protocol so that it can be more user-friendly and easy to be adopted.

It is a challenge for Hong Kong anti-drug workers to work in a changing drug abuse landscape. Though the number of drug abusers reported to the Central Registry of Drug Abuse in the first half of 2005 was declining, the percentage of poly-drug abusers in the same period has increased to 25.6%, as compared with 19.9% in 2001. The situation is aggravated by the fact that youngsters under 21 taking multiple drugs stood at 55.3% in the first half of 2005, much higher than 46% recorded in 2001. While the protocol is not meant to replace professional psychiatric diagnosis, it will surely equip frontline workers with essential knowledge, and serve as an effective tool in enabling the anti-drug workers to tackle the looming problem of poly-drug abuse through early identification and intervention.

Once again, my heartfelt thanks go to the four research team members for their unfailing efforts to develop and refine the protocol for the benefit of anti-drug work.



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Commissioner for Narcotics
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