

PREFACE

I am pleased to present the fourth edition of the Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards.

Launched in 2002, the Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards aim to provide reference standards on commonly used Chinese Materia Medica (CMM), to ensure the quality of raw materials used for production of proprietary Chinese medicines, and to enhance the safety of CMM. The Standards also facilitate the research and development of Chinese medicine.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the use of traditional medicine has surged in many developed and developing countries since 1990. Indeed, the *WHO Regional Strategy for Traditional Medicine in the Western Pacific (2011–2020)* calls upon the WHO Member States to maximize the potential and the universal access to health services of traditional medicine for the people of the Region. It is a public health priority to promote the access and the use of safe and effective traditional medicine through developing standards of quality, safety and efficacy. The Standards, therefore, stand in good stead to achieve these aims. In the 2011/12 Policy Address, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong SAR Government reaffirmed the commitment to develop Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards for 200 CMM by 2012.

Since the first publication in 2005, the Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards are increasingly quoted by local and overseas authorities, organisations, and the industry. This reflects a wide recognition of the robust scientific process in developing the Chinese Materia Medica standards. An International Advisory Board, which was set up in 2002 and comprising international experts, provides invaluable advice on principles, methodologies, parameters and analytical methods for the development of Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards. As of today, the International Advisory Board has evaluated and endorsed the standards for 98 CMM.

The fourth edition contains reference standards for 36 CMM. While adopting similar presentation formats from previous publications, we are mindful of the latest technological advances and the need for environmental protection. Thus, the use of green chemistry (e.g. avoiding the use of chloroform and benzene) and the new testing techniques, such as Liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry have been implemented in the laboratory research. As we move towards our quest for excellence in the Chinese medicine research, I am confident that Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards will be increasingly adopted by the industry for the authentication of Chinese medicine.

In order to bring in more expertise for the extensive development of the Chinese medicine research, we look beyond Hong Kong for further collaboration. In 2011, we signed cooperation agreements with the

National Institutes for Food and Drug Control, PRC and the China Medical University of Taiwan to develop reference standards for the next phase of the Standards Project.

Our success cannot be achieved without the support of International Advisory Board, its Editorial Board and our partners. My indebtedness goes to the Government Laboratory of the HKSAR, as well as the research teams of the six universities, namely the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the City University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the University of Hong Kong. My gratitude also goes to the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the State Food and Drug Administration and the Chinese Pharmacopoeia Commission of the People's Republic of China for their advice on the development of the Standards, and their permission to adopt the information from the Chinese Pharmacopoeia to the Standards.

Chinese medicine, which has been used for thousands of years, is of great benefit to mankind. With our joint effort, the Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards will continue to contribute to the use of evidence-based, safe and quality Chinese medicine in the population.

Dr P Y LAM
Director of Health
January 2012



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