We are CMEL! Welcome to the twenty-second issue of the CMEL Newsletter! This publication aims to update you on the latest news and information in the biomedical world. We will also share information about upcoming events, so stay tuned! Find out more about CMEL. We also have a Facebook page, you can follow us here.

Top stories in this newsletter

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Workshop on the legal and ethical responsibility of healthcare institutions and professionals

Our workshop entitled “Hospitals, Doctors and Nurses: The law and ethics of responsibility” was successfully held on 30 November and 1 December 2018. The workshop was accredited with continuing education points by the Law Society of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine and the Hong Kong Doctors Union. Read more here.

Case Update: English case potentially changing the law of patient confidentiality set for trial next year

A patient was diagnosed with Huntington’s disease in the United Kingdom. The hospital did not inform his pregnant daughter of his condition or the risk that the daughter and the child then in her womb would inherit the disease. The daughter was subsequently diagnosed with the disease, and the child she gave birth to had a 50% chance of developing the disease. The daughter sued, among others, the relevant hospital trust for failing to disclose to her her father’s condition and the risk above. The Court of Appeal of the UK quashed the order striking out the daughter’s claim. This case is now set for trial next year and is expected to impact on the legal obligations owed by healthcare institutions and professionals to the relatives of a patient to disclose genetic information. Read more here.

In the News: Call for review of the regulation of proprietary Chinese medicine in Hong Kong

The Ombudsman urges the Hong Kong government to review the regulation of proprietary Chinese medicine. Currently, a proprietary product will only be categorized as a “proprietary Chinese medicine” in Hong Kong if it composes solely of the following as active ingredients: (i) any Chinese herbal medicines or (ii) any materials of herbal, animal or mineral origin customarily used by the Chinese or (iii) any medicines and materials referred to in (i) and (ii) above. The Ombudsman is concerned that this might allow proprietors to circumvent the requirement for registration as a proprietary Chinese medicine by adding some ingredient which is not a medicine or material referred to in (i) or (ii) above as an active ingredient such that the product would not be categorized as a “proprietary Chinese medicine” and be subjected to regulation. Read more here.

In Commentary: Biotechnology firms will soon launch a genetic screening service which will allow parents to choose embryos which will more likely become healthy grown-ups

In further news about reproduction and genetics, two biotechnology firms will launch a genetic screening service which will allow parents to choose for implantation in the mother’s womb embryos which will more likely become healthy grown-ups. Read more here.

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