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SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
CHINESE MEDICINE DIVISION
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本署檔號 OUR REF.: (353/08) in DH TCMD/6-20/20

來函檔號 YOUR REF.:

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1 December 2008

Dear Chinese medicine practitioners and traders,

Use of Chinese Herbal Medicine – Medulla Junci (燈心草)

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is very concerned about the quality and safety of Chinese herbal medicines used in Hong Kong. In 2001, the Department of Health (DH) started the “Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards” (HKCMMS) project, which aims to develop quality and safety standards for Chinese herbal medicines in Hong Kong.

The HKCMMS project covers 60 Chinese herbal medicines commonly used in the local community and is divided into three phases. The research work is carried out by local universities. An International Advisory Board (IAB) and a Scientific Committee were established to evaluate and endorse the research results, and to provide technical guidance, respectively.

The standards for 32 Chinese herbal medicines covered in the first two phases of HKCMMS were published in two volumes. Phase III of the project covers 28 Chinese herbal medicines including Medulla Junci (燈心草), and the research work has just been completed.

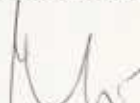
Medulla Junci (燈心草) is a Chinese herbal medicine included in Schedule 2 of the Chinese Medicine Ordinance in Hong Kong. It is the **stem pith** of *Juncus effuses* L. (Juncaceae). Same description of medicinal part is also found in the Chinese Pharmacopoeia (Volume 1 of 2005 Edition). Medulla Junci (燈心草) can eliminate excessive “heart-qi” and induce urination. It is commonly used for treatment of fidgetiness, insomnia, oliguria, painful difficult urination and with ulceration in the mouth or on the tongue.

In phase III of the HKCMMS project, it was found that Medulla Junci (燈心草) commonly sold in Hong Kong was **whole plant** of the herb instead of **stem pith** only (please refer to the information sheet attached). According to the research results, the active ingredient in stem pith was higher than that of whole plant. The results of other indicators were also more favourable when using stem pith only. Therefore, IAB members considered that the medicinal part of Medulla Junci (燈心草) should be its “stem pith” and not the whole plant.

Taking into account the recommendation of the IAB and with a view to enhancing the control of Chinese herbal medicines in Hong Kong, we urge you to observe and comply with the requirements as set out in the Chinese Medicine Ordinance when purchasing, accepting, retailing and dispensing Medulla Junci (燈心草).

Should you have any enquiry, please contact the Chinese Medicine Division of DH at 2319 5119.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr Amy PY Chiu)
for Director of Health

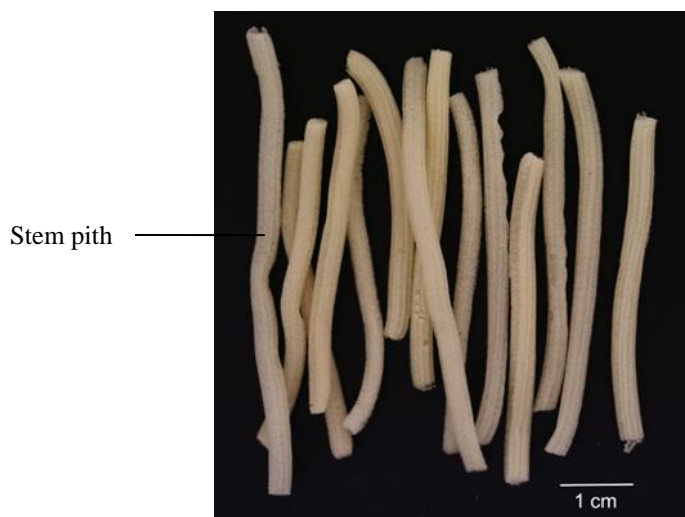
Use of Chinese Herbal Medicine -- Medulla Junci (燈心草)

Medulla Junci (燈心草) is a Chinese herbal medicine listed in Schedule 2 of the Chinese Medicine Ordinance, which is commonly used in Hong Kong. . It is the **stem pith** of *Juncus effuses* L. (Juncaceae) (Figure 1). It can eliminate excessive “heart-qi” and induce urination. It is commonly used for treatment of fidgetiness, insomnia, oliguria, painful difficult urination and with ulceration in the mouth or on the tongue.

According to the description stated in the Chinese Pharmacopoeia (Volume 1 of 2005 Edition) and the Chinese Medicine Ordinance in Hong Kong, **stem pith** should be used as the medicinal part of Medulla Junci (燈心草). However, in Hong Kong, whole plant of the herb (including **stem pith**, stem bark, and inflorescence or infructescence) is commonly used as the medicinal part of Medulla Junci (燈心草) (Figure 2).

When obtaining Medulla Junci (燈心草) from Chinese medicine practitioners or retailers, members of the public should be aware that they are provided with the **stem pith of the herb** instead of the **whole plant**. They are also advised to purchase Chinese herbal medicines from licensed Chinese medicine traders and retail shops with good reputation.

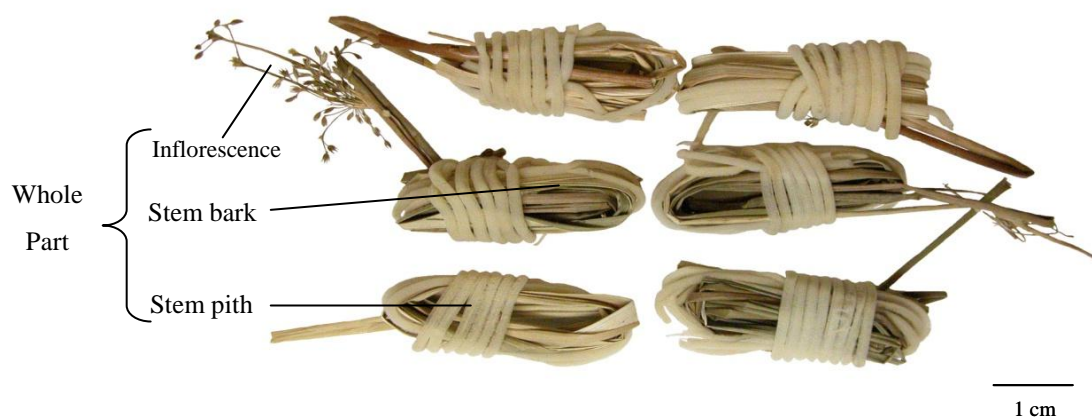
Figure 1 Medulla Junci (Stem Pith)



Source	<i>Juncus effusus</i> L. (Juncaceae)
Description	Long-slender and cylindrical, up to 90cm long, 1-3mm in diameter. Externally white or pale yellowish-white, with fine longitudinal striations. Texture light, soft, slightly elastic, easily broken when

	stretching, fracture white. Odour slight, tasteless.
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Figure 2 Whole Plant



Source	<i>Juncus effusus</i> L. (Juncaceae)
Description	Stem bark striped-like or banded-like, up to 80cm long, 3-6mm wide. Externally yellowish-green, darker at base, with remnant of lateral inflorescence or infructescence, internally greyish-white, with dented longitudinal wrinkles. For the description of stem pith, please refer to Medulla Junci (Figure 1).

Department of Health

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

December 2008