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Patients warned against doctors peddling unproven beauty treatments

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Singapore - Singapore's Ministry of Health has warned patients against doctors peddling unproven beauty treatments ranging from drug cocktails said to dissolve fat to anti-ageing hormone injections, a published report said on Wednesday. More than half of Singapore's general practitioners are offering lucrative beauty fixes, some of which have been banned in other countries, a ministry check revealed.

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"Doctors who sell snake oil pose greater danger to the public than lay persons selling snake oil because the public trusts doctors more," The Straits Times quoted a ministry spokesman as saying.

While treatments such as firing water into the large intestine and using carbon dioxide to zap cellulite are not illegal, they are not supported by medical evidence.

The ministry identified three procedures that patients should be wary about and advised people to ask their doctors for evidence that the treatments work.

Among the procedures was mesotherapy, which involves tiny injections to break down fat. Practitioners claim it dissolves the fat, carrying it through the blood-stream to be expelled from the body.

The US Food and Drug Administration does not approve of the use of any mesotherapy drugs. Britain, Canada and Brazil have also banned drugs purporting to dissolve fat.

Skin whitening injections and growth hormone treatments were also cited.

The Singapore Medical Council is investigating six doctors following complaints about their work.

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