

China cracks down on medication of schoolchildren (Update)

March 18 2014

China's education ministry ordered a nationwide investigation on Tuesday into whether schools are giving students medication without permission after a protest by parents of kindergarteners who were given an antiviral drug.

The announcement came a week after an angry protest by parents whose children were given the drug in the city of Xi'an. Some children suffered stomach pain, dizziness and other symptoms but authorities say it is unclear whether it was linked to the drug.

Police in Xi'an said two kindergartens gave children the medication to improve attendance rates and boost their incomes. Police said they have detained suspects and are determining how extensively the medication was used.

A kindergarten in the northeastern city of Jilin also was found to be giving the drug to students.

Authorities shut down a kindergarten in the central city of Yichang after its president admitted giving pupils an over-the-counter anti-fever drug and vitamins to boost immunity and improve attendance, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The scandals have raised public concerns over the safety and health of schoolchildren.

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Citation: China cracks down on medication of schoolchildren (Update) (2014, March 18)
retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-03-china-medication-schoolchildren.html>

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