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A doctor in the People's Hospital in northwest China's Qinghai Province examines one of the patients still critically ill after being given an injection.

Two 'critical' as drug recalled

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TWO people who used a herbal drug that was implicated in a woman's death remained in a critical condition yesterday in northwest China's Qinghai Province, a hospital official said.

The patients had improved but they still had life-threatening symptoms, said Wang Xiaobo, vice president of the Qinghai People's Hospital.

Both had used Shuanghuanglian, an injected herbal preparation which was recalled nationwide after a 62-year-old woman in the province died in hospital on Tuesday.

All three developed fever and breathing difficulties after receiving injections on Monday and Tuesday in the Datong Hui and Tujia Autonomous County of northwestern Qinghai.

Tian Zengcheng, 48, was diagnosed with acute renal failure when he arrived at the hospital. After emergency treatment and dialysis, his condition improved but he was still weak and had difficulty urinating.

Tian's problems began when he caught a cold and went to a clinic in Dongmen Village on Sunday, his niece, Tian Guiping, said.

Doctors gave him a two-day supply of drugs, including Shuanghuanglian, a herbal drug that comes from northeastern Heilongjiang Province.

He began to show symptoms of an adverse reaction the following day.

The other patient, Wang Rongfa, a man of 51, has liver failure. Wang's condition has stabilized and he is sleeping well, said his wife, Li Dejie.

A team of 12 has been set up in the hospital, and experts were called from Beijing and Shanghai. An investigation was launched in Jiamusi City, Heilongjiang, as a task force composed of the Heilongjiang food and drug administrative bureau and its local bureaus confiscated parts of two batches of the product made by the Jiamusi factory of the Wusuli River Pharmacy.

An initial investigation showed that the batch numbers were 0809028 and 0809030. The factory produced 505 and 576 boxes, one box containing 450 injections, of the two batches, respectively.

More than 400,000 injections were sold in Qinghai, Heibei, Heilongjiang and Shandong provinces, according to the State Food and Drug Administration.

The factory has manufactured nine batches with 5,076 boxes this year. It had 615 boxes in storage, which have been sealed by the local government.

Shuanghuanglian injections are used to treat fever and coughs.

Xinhua