

Exclusive: SBS Radio investigation reveals prohibited drugs readily available for sale in Australian South Asian grocery stores

Illegally imported Indian 'Kamini' tablets found to contain opiates

[*Full online investigation here*](#)

An exclusive investigation led by SBS Radio's Punjabi program has revealed illegal importation of prohibited drugs to Australia. Readily available to purchase in South Asian grocery stores, the pill known as Kamini Vidrawan Ras (Kamini), was found to include opium and heavy toxic metal and that consumption can cause serious health outcomes.

After listeners started to raise concerns about the availability and increased sale of Kamini, SBS Radio commissioned independent laboratory testing on products purchased in Melbourne, which revealed that the pills contain Codeine, Morphine and Papaverine - major components found in Opium.

SBS Punjabi Radio Executive Producer, Manpreet Kaur Singh, said: "Many people have contacted us about opiates and other illicit substances imported from India being easily accessible in most Australian cities. At least two people who have been affected by the consumption of Kamini tablets spoke to us during this investigation, raising concern about its widespread use within the community."

Originally marketed as an 'Indian Viagra', Kamini is sold as an Ayurvedic remedy to improve men's virility in India. However, it is also taken as a supplement, which users believe improves physical stamina and maintains alertness.

The investigation found that there was between one and five per cent (approximately between 2mg and 20mg) of Opium in a typical Kamini tablet. The effects of consumption can lead to personal and financial problems for those addicted.

Dr Gurdip Aurora, a medical practitioner from Melbourne, is concerned about the easy availability of the drug, being sold in the guise of an ancient Indian herbal therapy: "This is definitely not an Ayurvedic medicine. It contains chemicals and components which are probably banned in most countries around the world. It is highly addictive. This medicine is so dangerous that if someone overdoses on it, it can even be fatal."



During the investigation, an anonymous source from within the Indian community informed SBS Radio that Kamini pills are imported into the country through shipping containers, alongside everyday grocery items including wheat, lentils, spices and snack-foods.

The source told SBS Radio: “Although I know of one person who used to import shoes and would bring in these things hidden inside shoes, I would say 90% of this stuff is now being shipped in by food importers.”

Following the testing of two available products, the Australian Government Department of Health - Therapeutic Goods Administration has advised that Kamini tablets pose serious health risks and contain substances that are prescription-only in Australia.

They further advise that substances found in these tablets are prohibited imports under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956 if licensing and permit requirements are not met before importation and that the supply of these products in Australia is illegal. Full details here: <http://www.tga.gov.au/alert/multani-kamini-vidrawan-ras-tablets-and-ayurvedant-kamini-vidravan-ras-tablets>.

Peter Shelton, Manager of Regulatory Services at the City of Greater Dandenong, told SBS that the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services is aware of the availability of Kamini and has issued a warning to all local governments about it.

“We did receive advice from the State Department of Health about [Kamini] asking us to be aware of it, and to look for it when we’re doing inspections, but we haven’t come across it in our municipality as yet,” he said.

The Department of Immigration and Border Protection, which oversees the work of the Australian Border Force (ABF), acknowledged that the ABF had detected importations of Kamini at Australia’s borders.

A spokesperson said: “The Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956 prohibit the importation of medications such as this, which contain opium, and the ABF will seize the goods.”

When contacted by SBS Radio, Victoria Police advised that they had not currently been involved in the seizure of Kamini.

The SBS Radio investigation also found that chewing tobacco was readily available to purchase in South Asian grocery stores. According to Australian law, up to 1.5 kilograms of smokeless tobacco can be imported for personal use and must be declared, and any sale is banned and deemed unsafe for the public.

A comprehensive report on the investigation is now available [online](#) at the SBS Radio Punjabi website, including detailed responses from all stakeholders.

Watch the full report on SBS World News at 6.30 pm