

**Complication following acupuncture treatment  
(07HDC12714, 31 January 2008)**

*Acupuncturist ~ Explanation of risks and complications ~ Pneumothorax ~ Right 6(1)(b)*

A woman attended her fifteenth acupuncture treatment for respiratory problems. The treatment was uneventful, the acupuncturist using the same technique and equipment as on previous occasions. After leaving the clinic she felt unwell. Her condition worsened and she was taken by ambulance to an Emergency Department. A chest X-ray revealed total collapse of the left lung.

It was held that the acupuncture equipment and technique were of an appropriate standard and did not breach the Code. However, the acupuncturist failed to provide specific information about the risks of coughing during the needling process, in particular the risk of a pneumothorax (lung injury). This information should have been disclosed given the woman's known history of coughing. Accordingly, the acupuncturist breached Right 6(1)(b).