



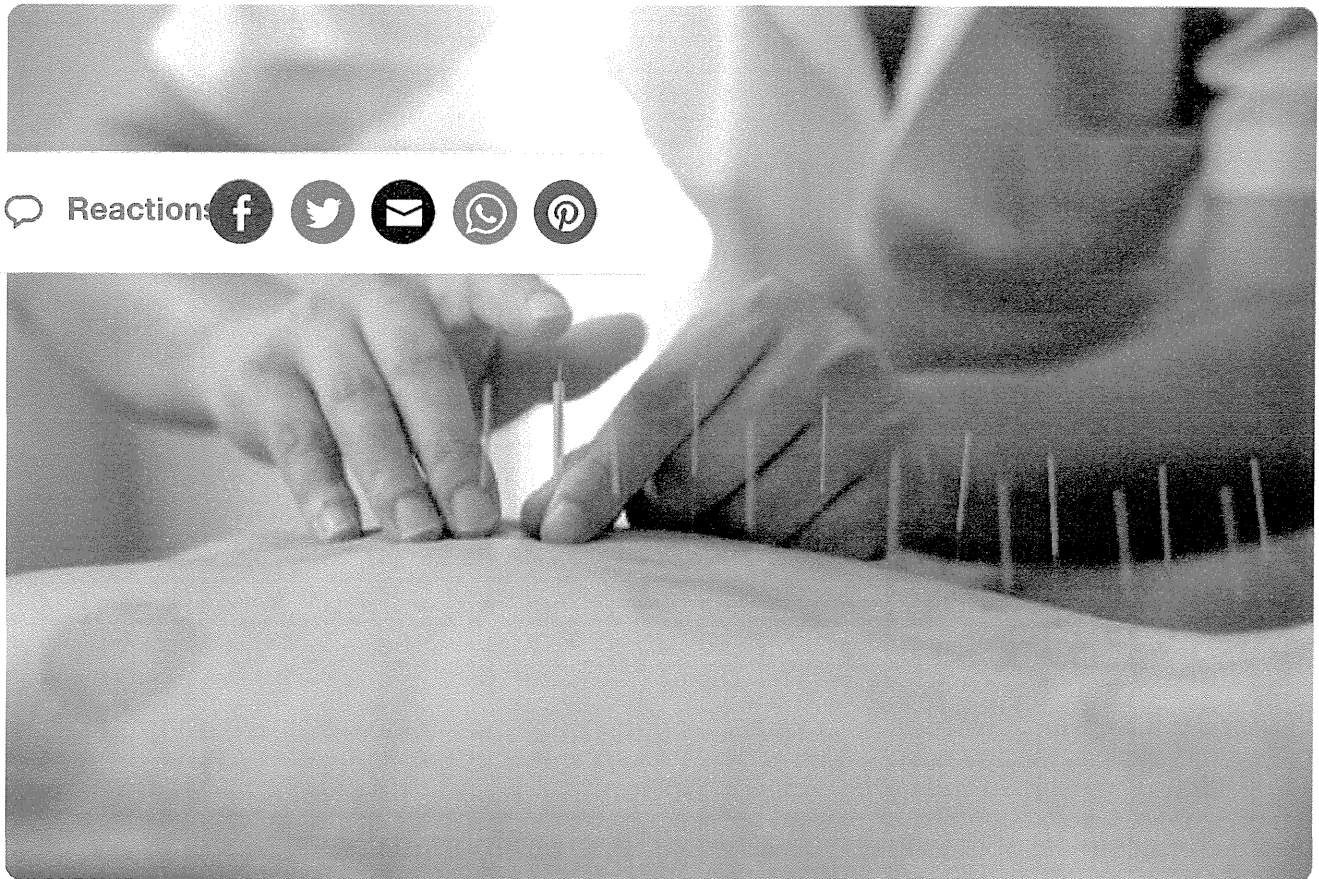
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## TCM physician who treated patients during circuit breaker fined \$10,500



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Traditional Chinese Medicine acupuncture. (PHOTO: Getty Images)

SINGAPORE — A Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) practitioner who provided medical services during the circuit breaker period last year was fined \$10,500 on Wednesday (7 April).

Nie Xin, a 46-year-old Singaporean, was the sole owner of D&N Chinese Treatment

She pleaded guilty on Wednesday to one charge of leaving her residence without reasonable excuse during the partial lockdown period, and two charges of failing to ensure the premises were closed on 29 April. Another four charges of a similar nature were taken into consideration for her sentencing.

A day before the circuit breaker kicked in on 7 April last year, the Ministry of Health (MOH) issued a circular to all TCM practitioners stating that all non-essential TCM services and treatment should be deferred from 7 April for a period of four weeks, and that only essential TCM services could continue.

Services such as acupuncture and moxibustion were banned during this period as

these involved direct and prolonged contact with patients.

TCM clinics would only be deemed essential service providers if they provided adjuvant therapy for cancer or other chronic conditions. Any TCM practitioners who wished to practise during this period would need to notify MOH of their intention but Nie did not do so.

A Singapore permanent resident, Wang Qian, 43, contacted Nie at 10am on 29 April to ask if the clinic was open that day. Wang informed Nie that her eldest son had not recovered from a cough since December 2019 and asked if Nie could check on her son.

Nie said that the clinic was closed but asked Wang to make an appointment over the phone to collect medicine from her at the clinic. Wang also informed Nie that she had difficulties sleeping, and Nie arranged to meet her and her son at D&N at about 12.45pm that day.

At about 11am that same day, a Singaporean man, Bryan Cheong, asked Nie to make an appointment for his wife, Zhang Yan, as she felt pain in her waist. Nie arranged to meet her at about 1pm.

Nie left her residence for her clinic and checked Wang's mouth and the tongue of Wang's son while donning a mask.

She prescribed the son some powdered medication for his cough and some medication for Wang, charging her \$315 in total. Mother and son left after 15 minutes.

Cheong and Zhang arrived at about 1pm and Nie treated Zhang. She prescribed her medication and herbal tonic, charging her \$325 in total. The couple left after one hour and 10 minutes.

Zhang complained about the services and Nie later returned the \$325 that Zhang had paid. Cheong notified the Ministry of Trade and Industry via email that Nie had provided unauthorised services during the circuit breaker period, on 15 May last year.

In the course of initial investigations, Nie only admitted that she had seen Zhang at D&N on 29 April, but did not reveal that she had seen other customers during the

circuit breaker period.

Upon conducting further investigations and reviewing the available receipt books at D&N, investigators confirmed that she had left her residence on no less than three  
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