

# **Social Justice Watch 0401**

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PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERTO SCHMIDT,  
AFP/GETTY

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ANIMALS | CORONAVIRUS COVERAGE

## China promotes bear bile as coronavirus treatment, alarming wildlife advocates

China's National Health Commission published a list of recommended treatments, including injections that contain bear bile powder.

5 MINUTE READ

5 MINUTE READ



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BY RACHEL FOBAR

PUBLISHED MARCH 25, 2020

Less than a month after taking steps to permanently ban the trade and consumption of live wild animals for food, the Chinese government has recommended using Tan Re Qing, an injection containing bear bile, to treat severe and critical COVID-19 cases. It is one of a number of recommended coronavirus treatments—both traditional and Western—on a list published March 4 by China's National Health Commission, the government body responsible for national health policy. This recommendation highlights what wildlife advocates say is a contradictory approach to wildlife: shutting down the live trade in animals

shutting down the live trade in animals for food on the one hand and promoting the trade in animal parts on the other.

Secreted by the liver and stored in the gallbladder, bile from various species of bears, including Asiatic black bears and brown bears, has been used in traditional Chinese medicine since at least the eighth century. It contains high levels of ursodeoxycholic acid, also known as ursodiol, which is clinically proven to help dissolve gallstones and treat liver disease. Ursodeoxycholic acid has been available as a synthetic drug worldwide for decades.

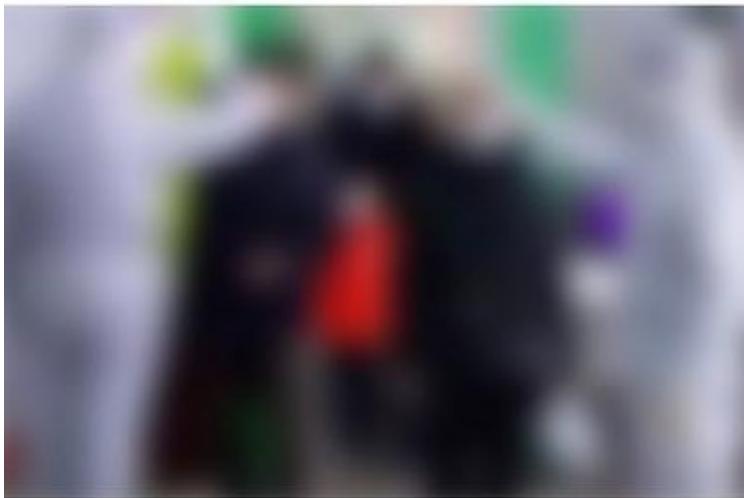
The World Health Organization says no cure exists for COVID-19, though some medicines, such as pain relievers and cough syrup, can treat symptoms associated with the disease. (Read about what scientists know and don't know about treating coronavirus.)

*Traditional Chinese medicine*

Traditional Chinese medicine practitioners typically use Tan Re Qing to treat bronchitis and upper respiratory infections. Clifford Steer, a professor at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, has studied the medical benefits of ursodeoxycholic acid. He knows of no evidence that bear bile is an effective treatment for the novel coronavirus. But, he says, ursodeoxycholic acid is distinct from other bile acids in its ability to keep cells alive and may alleviate symptoms of COVID-19 because of its anti-inflammatory properties and ability to calm the immune response.

Enacted in 1989, China's wildlife protection law sees wild animals as a resource to be used for the benefit of humans. In 2016, it was amended to further legitimize the commercial use of wildlife, asserting explicitly that animals can be used for traditional Chinese medicine. Humane Society

can be used for traditional Chinese medicine, Humane Society International's China policy specialist Peter Li wrote at the time.



China's government has recommended treating severe and critical cases of COVID-19... [Read More](#)

PHOTOGRAPH BY STR, AFP/GETTY

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Although use of bear bile from captive animals is legal in China, bile from wild bears is banned, as is the import of bear bile from other countries. According to Aron White, wildlife campaigner for the Environmental Investigation Agency

Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)—a nonprofit based in London, England, that exposes wildlife crimes—his organization learned first about the Chinese government's recommendations to treat COVID-19 via social media posts from illegal traders.

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“We were witnessing how this government recommendation was being coopted by the traffickers to advertise their illegal products as a treatment,” White says. Illegal bile from wild bears is produced in China, he says, and is also imported from wild and captive bears in Laos, Vietnam, and North Korea. The illegal trade persists even though Asiatic black bears, one of the species most commonly farmed for their bile, are protected from international commercial trade under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, which regulates cross-border trade of wildlife and wildlife products.

Wildlife advocates worry that China’s recommended use of Tan Re Qing injections, which contain goat horn powder and extracts from several plants

in addition to bear bile powder and gall

powder and extracts from several plants in addition to bear bile powder, will increase the trade in illegal wildlife products and justify animal abuse.

“There’s a consistent preference among consumers for the wild product, which is often regarded as more powerful or ‘the real deal,’” White says. “So, having this legal market from captivity doesn’t reduce pressure on the wild populations —it actually just maintains demand that drives poaching.”

At bear bile farms in China and across Southeast Asia, the animals may be kept for decades in small cages. Bile is routinely extracted by inserting a catheter, syringe, or pipe into the gallbladder. All methods for extracting bile are invasive and “cause severe suffering, pain, and infection,” according to Animals Asia, a nonprofit dedicated to ending bear bile farming. Neglect and disease are common on these farms, and consumers risk ingesting bile from sick bears, which

these farms, and consumers risk ingesting bile from sick bears, which may be contaminated with blood, feces, pus, urine, and bacteria, according to Animals Asia.



Bile is pumped from the gallbladder of a sedated Asiatic black bear. Because diseases... [Read More](#)

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK LEONG, NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION

Another traditional medicine on the National Health Commission's approved list that could be in demand for use against COVID-19 is a pill called

距离中国全面禁止非法野生动物交易不到一个月，CDC针对新冠病毒的推荐用药中就加了一味含有熊胆的中药注射剂（痰热清），引起动物保护人士不满。[source](#)

00:14



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NEWS

## Teen Who Died of Covid-19 Was Denied Treatment Because He Didn't Have Health Insurance



Matt Novak

Today 7:00AM • Filed to: COVID-19 ▾



189



3





People sit on a hill overlooking Dodger Stadium and downtown Los Angeles on March 26, 2020.

Photo: Getty Images

A 17-year-old boy in Los Angeles County who became the first teen believed to have died from



Share



Tweet

洛杉矶郡一名新冠阳性的17岁少年去诊所被拒，因为没有保险。少年被告知，可以去同区域的公立医院急诊碰碰运气，结果在过去的路上心脏骤停，抢救六小时还是过了世。世上没有完美的医疗体系，美国的市场化机制有他的益处，但一个不照顾弱势群体的医疗体系肯定不会是我的选择。这孩子后来还被移出了新冠死亡名单，因为准确的死亡原因有待进一步考证 [gizmodo.com/teen-who-died-of-covid-19-was-denied-treatment-because-1842520539](https://gizmodo.com/teen-who-died-of-covid-19-was-denied-treatment-because-1842520539) source

9:23



mobile.reuters.com

# U.S. judges stop Texas, Ohio, Alabama from curbing abortions during coronavirus crisis

Andrew Chung





FILE PHOTO: Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (C) holds a news conference to announce Texas and 20 other states have filed a lawsuit against the state of Delaware over millions of dollars in unclaimed official checks Paxton says have wrongly been remitted to Delaware, at the Supreme Court building in Washington, U.S. June 9, 2016.

REUTERS/JONATHAN ERNST/FILE PHOTO

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(Reuters) - Federal judges on Monday blocked officials in Texas, Ohio and Alabama from banning most abortions in those states as part of their orders to postpone surgeries and other procedures deemed not medically necessary during the coronavirus crisis.

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9:20



## Tweet



ACLU ✅  
@ACLU



🎉 VICTORY: Just hours after filing our legal challenge, a federal court has ruled to block Ohio's attempts at preventing access to abortion during the COVID-19 crisis.

Abortion is essential, time-sensitive health care — and it will continue in Ohio.

4:06 PM · 3/30/20 · TweetDeck

565 Retweets 2,494 Likes



**Paige Simonson** @Matisse68 · 5h



Replying to @ACLU

Thank you for continuing to help so many.



**Jessica** @Jessica\_in\_Iowa · 4h



Tweet your reply



9:19



## Tweet



ACLU ✅  
@ACLU



ANOTHER WIN: A federal court has now blocked Alabama's attacks on abortion providers. Clinics can now resume caring for their patients.

This is the third ruling today to stop state's attempts to use the pandemic to restrict access to abortion.

5:52 PM · 3/30/20 · Twitter Web App

5:52 PM · 3/30/20 · Twitter Web App

885 Retweets 4,070 Likes



Lee in Iowa #StayHome #TeamPe... · 2h ▾

Replying to @ACLU and @MaEnraged

We need you in Iowa too.



Andrea @Andrea\_51544005 · 3h ▾

Replying to @ACLU

Now do Ohio

Tweet your reply



9:27



## Thread

↪ ACLU of Texas Retweeted



**Center for Reproductive Rights** ✅  
@ReproRights



BREAKING: Last week, we sued Texas for trying to ban abortion in the state in response to [#COVID19](#). Today, a federal judge ruled that abortion services can continue... for now.

[#AbortionIsEssential](#)

2:25 PM · 3/30/20 · Twitter for iPhone

197 Retweets 694 Likes



Center for Reproductive Rights · 7h

Replies to @ReproRights

Abortion is not a procedure that can be delayed or forgone without serious consequences to a pregnant person's health and future. We'll keep fighting to ensure that all states treat abortion as what it is: time sensitive and essential health care.

0 2

↑ 28

108

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Tweet your reply



三个试图禁止堕胎的州，在民间团体诉讼下。已经被联邦法院暂时驳回咯  
民间力量赞！ [source](#)

When  
‘i’ is replaced by ‘we’  
even ‘illness’ becomes  
‘wellness’



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YouTube

"Stand By Me" - A Chinese & American Lesbian Love Story

Michelle is a lawyer from Sichuan, China. Pat was born and raised in San Jose, California. They had China's first high-profile lesbian wedding in Chengdu, Si...

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2KEQHB8lrs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2KEQHB8lrs)

YouTube

公益纪录片：矿民、马夫、尘肺病(Miner, Horsekeeper and

Pneumoconiosis:a Chinese public-interest documentary)

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