

`Cruel' mother jailed over baby injuries

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A mother of seven - described by a judge as "extremely selfish and cruel" - has been jailed for 20 months for failing to seek immediate treatment for her baby girl who suffered a fractured skull.

Nightclub worker Cheung Ka-lai, 29, told the court she dropped the baby on the escalator of a shopping mall, but District Court Judge Sham Siu-man said she could not substantiate the claim and subsequent actions proved otherwise.

The then three-month-old girl suffered a fractured skull in February but was not sent to hospital until one month later when her grandmother noticed bruising on the child's forehead.

Even then, Cheung left the hospital before learning of the diagnosis.

X-rays and an examination showed the baby had fractures of the skull, arms, legs and other parts of the body.

The court was told the child, who is now under the care of Mother's Choice, has since fully recovered and there is no permanent damage.

However, the medical report submitted to the court suggested the injuries may not have been accidental.

Passing sentence, the judge said the truth behind the serious injuries suffered by the girl will remain with the mother.

"But I think you fled because you were afraid the paramedics would find out the truth behind those injuries," Judge Sham said.

"You can imagine the pain the baby suffered ... she was left untreated with those painful injuries for one month and every move she made or when she was bathed or changed must have caused her yet more pain," he said.

"You are extremely selfish and cruel to cause her such pain."

Cheung, who is a drug abuser, said through her lawyer she wants to be a good mother and would like to take care of her children, a request Judge Sham denied.

"You can barely take care of yourself with your drug problem. You are being unfair to your children. I don't think you can take care of her [the baby]," he said.

Cheung claimed she had given up drugs but a urine test showed traces of heroin.

She was married twice - on both occasions to mainlanders - and had relationships with four men with whom she had three sons and four daughters, aged two to 15.

The eldest son is under the care of his biological father while the others are under foster care or in boarding schools.

Source:

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