

**REDUCING HARM TO PATIENTS FROM HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS**

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has released the draft report *Reducing harm to patients through healthcare associated infection: the role of surveillance*.

Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) acquired in the hospital setting are a major cause of death and increased morbidity for hospital patients worldwide.

The report *Reducing harm to patients through healthcare associated infection: the role of surveillance* has been compiled by 51 experts in infectious diseases from across Australia, and provides up to date scientific and clinical advice on how to reduce HAI by the use of the surveillance of processes of care and of infection rates of certain micro-organisms, in a variety of settings.

Chief Executive of the Commission, Professor Chris Baggoley, said 'Hospital associated infections are a public concern. It is estimated that there are 200,000 healthcare associated infections in our hospitals each year in Australia. They cause patients pain, suffering and some patients die as a result.'

"Surveillance systems lead to preventive action. This document focuses on high risk micro-organisms including *Staphylococcus aureus*, multi resistant organisms and *Clostridium difficile*, on high risk infections and on high risk settings such as Intensive Care Units, Neonatal Intensive Care Units in hospital settings and also a focus on residential care facilities."

*Reducing harm to patients through healthcare associated infection: the role of surveillance* also provides a comprehensive picture of the surveillance of HAI in Australia and demonstrates the costs that these infections impose upon individual Australians and the health system. Each chapter includes recommendations and a summary of key points based on the material presented.

The Commission will be seeking submissions from interested parties on the paper to ensure that the final strategy is of value to those receiving health services and those working in the field, prior to presentation to Australian Health Ministers.

The role of surveillance as a tool to reduce health care associated infections is just one of a number of strategies the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care is employing. Others include a national hand hygiene initiative, national infection control guidelines (with NHMRC) an antibiotic stewardship initiative and a program building clinician capacity in this area of healthcare.

For further information please visit [www.safetyandquality.gov.au](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au) or call (02) 9263 3633.