$500,000 awarded to evaluate the National Hand Hygiene Initiative

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care is pleased to congratulate Associate Professor Nicholas Graves, Queensland University of Technology, who has been awarded a $500,000 NHMRC Partnerships for Better Health Grant to evaluate the impact of the National Hand Hygiene Initiative on reducing healthcare-associated infections in public hospitals.

Reducing healthcare associated infection is a key program of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission).

The Grant awarded to Professor Graves will enable the evaluation of the hospital based intervention to improve hand hygiene compliance among Australian healthcare workers and reduce healthcare associated infection in hospitals. It will be undertaken through a partnership between the Commission, Queensland Health, Hand Hygiene Australia and researchers from Queensland University of Technology and the University of Queensland. The Health Departments of Tasmania, Queensland, Victoria, Northern Territory, and Western Australia will also partner the research.

The objectives of the project are to:

− Describe current infection control resources in Australian hospitals and the case-mix of patients treated
− Assess the level of knowledge about hand hygiene and infection among healthcare workers
− Examine the role of the organisational safety climate in determining hand hygiene compliance
− Describe the outcomes of hand hygiene compliance and rates of healthcare associated *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemia
− Assess the efficacy of a National Hand Hygiene Initiative for reducing rates of healthcare associated *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemia, and assess whether efficacy depends on hand hygiene compliance and other measurable factors
− Evaluate the total economic cost of implementing the National Hand Hygiene Initiative in Australian public hospitals
− Estimate excess length of stay in hospital due to healthcare associated *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemia
− Estimate the economic value of a bed day released by preventing infection, and, the cash savings from avoided cases of healthcare associated *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemia
− Assess the mortality risk and quality of life changes due to infection from healthcare associated *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemia
− Build an economic model to describe the cost-effectiveness of the National Hand Hygiene Initiative.

This work is an excellent opportunity to gather data to evaluate the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of the national initiative. The information gathered will inform the delivery, organisation and funding of initiatives and services targeting the issue of healthcare associated infection in Australian hospitals.

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