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New standard for clinical care to help in fight against antibiotic resistance

Australia has one of the highest rates of antibiotic use in the developed world, with around 22 million prescriptions written every year in primary care alone. In hospitals, 30% of antibiotics prescribed are used inappropriately*.

A new standard for clinical care, which will drive appropriate use of antibiotics, was launched today by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission). The launch of the Antimicrobial Stewardship Clinical Care Standard coincides with Antibiotic Awareness Week, a global initiative to raise awareness of antibiotic resistance and promote the responsible use of antibiotics.

Professor Willis Marshall AC, Chair of the Commission, said “the Antimicrobial Stewardship Clinical Care Standard will help reduce inappropriate use of antibiotics, improve patient outcomes and help to reduce antimicrobial resistance.”

Although antimicrobial resistance is a natural feature of bacterial evolution, the inappropriate use of antibiotics has increased the development of antimicrobial-resistant bacteria in hospitals and healthcare facilities and in the community.

“Antimicrobial resistant infections are becoming more common. The incidence of multi-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in the community has doubled since 2001,” said Professor Marshall.

The Antimicrobial Stewardship Clinical Care Standard aims to ensure every use of an antibiotic is targeted and appropriate to effectively treat patients, while limiting the rise of resistant bacteria that could harm the whole community.

The Antimicrobial Stewardship Clinical Care Standard is the first standard that applies to clinical practice to be launched in Australia. The Antimicrobial Stewardship Clinical Care Standard has been developed for use in a variety of settings, including hospital, general practice and residential aged care.

The Clinical Care Standards will play an important role in delivering appropriate care and reducing unwarranted healthcare variation for specific clinical conditions, as they identify and define the care people should expect to be offered regardless of where they are treated.

The Commission will launch Clinical Care Standards for Acute Coronary Syndromes in December 2014 and Stroke in 2015. Additional Clinical Care Standards have also been identified for development by the Commission.

*NAPS 2013, 151 hospitals.

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

The Commission is a government agency that leads and coordinates national improvements in safety and quality in health care across Australia. The Commission aims to support health care professionals, organisations and policy makers who work with patients and carers.

Antibiotic Awareness Week

Antibiotic Awareness Week in Australia is part of a global initiative to raise awareness of antibiotic resistance and promote the responsible use of antibiotics. In 2014, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care has worked with NPS MedicineWise, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, the Australian Veterinary Association, state and territory representatives and the private hospital sector to promote consistent messages about appropriate use of antibiotics in human and animal health.

Media inquiries

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