

Media Release: EMBARGO TO 5AM, TUESDAY 1 AUGUST 2017

Clinical trials pay off for safety, quality and the economy

The cost of clinical trials investigating gaps in medical evidence is outweighed almost six to one by the savings that flow from the health improvements experienced by patients, and the direct savings to the health system and wider economy.

A new report launched today by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) analysed 25 Australian clinical trials initiated by clinicians. The report finds that if the results of the 25 trials were implemented in just two-thirds of the relevant groups of patients for one year, \$1.4 billion would be saved through improvements in patient health outcomes, and a further \$580 million in reductions in health costs.

The report, called *Economic evaluation of investigator-initiated clinical trials conducted by networks*, finds the savings are equivalent to a benefit-to-cost ratio of 5.8:1 – meaning that for each \$1 invested in clinician-driven clinical trials in Australia, benefits of \$5.80 can be realised.

Clinical Director for the Commission Dr Robert Herkes said the findings of the study were significant.

‘The study shows that the bulk of the economic impact of these trials comes from improving patient outcomes as well as improving the safety and quality of health care,’ Dr Herkes said.

Until now, there has been no attempt to evaluate formally the consolidated economic impact of trials conducted by dedicated clinical trials networks in Australia. The report finds that not only was there an overall saving of \$2 billion, but also that results from the 25 trials only needed to be implemented in 11% of the eligible patient populations for the benefits to exceed costs.

‘Australia is a leader in investigator-initiated trials, where clinicians come together to investigate a critical need or evidence gap in the way we look after patients,’ said ACTA Chair Professor John Zalcborg OAM.

‘There is growing evidence that these trials have a major impact in improving healthcare quality and outcomes on a global scale.

‘The results of this report encourage us to continue to translate the findings of our rigorous research into practice to ensure we continue to provide the highest standard of patient care, while also providing significant savings to the Australian healthcare system.’

The report evaluated 25 clinical trials that produced evidence regarded as sufficiently scientifically rigorous and compelling to change clinical practice. These trials involved over 50,000 participants and were conducted by three Australian clinical trial networks in stroke, intensive care and maternal and perinatal care.

'This report highlights the vital role of investigator-initiated research conducted by clinical trials networks to drive evidence-based improvements to our healthcare system,' Dr Herkes said.

'These improvements ensure clinicians have the best available information to continue to deliver the safest and highest quality standard of patient care.'

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care developed the report in partnership with the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance and in association with health economic agency Quantum Health Outcomes (formerly Health Outcomes Australia).

The three Australian Clinical Trial Networks evaluated in the report were the Australasian Stroke Trials Network (ASTN), Interdisciplinary Maternal Perinatal Australasian Collaborative Trials (IMPACT) Network and the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society Clinical Trials Group (ANZICS CTG).

You can read the report in full here: <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/publications/economic-evaluation-of-investigator-initiated-clinical-trials-conducted-by-networks/>

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Katherine Barnsley, Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
Katherine.barnsley@safetyandquality.gov.au
(02) 9126 3676 or 0429 211 376

Elle McGlynn, SenateSHJ
elle@senateshj.com.au
(02) 8257 0200 or 0425 319 321

About the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care is an Australian Government agency that leads and coordinates national improvements in the safety and quality of health care based on the best available evidence. By working in partnership with patients, consumers, clinicians, managers, policy makers and health care organisations, our aim is to achieve a sustainable, safe and high-quality health system. The Commission has an ongoing program of significant national activities with outcomes that are demonstrating direct patient benefit as well as creating essential underpinnings for ongoing improvement. The Commission aims to use its role as the national body

for safety and quality in health care in Australia to ensure that the health system is better informed, supported and organised to deliver safe and high-quality care.

About the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance

The Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) is a national peak alliance dedicated to promoting the design, conduct and implementation of investigator-initiated clinical trials to ensure a more effective and efficient Australian healthcare system through a world-first coalition of more than 10,000 clinical researchers across 50 clinical trials networks, trial coordinating centres and registries in Australia.

About Clinical Trial Networks

Clinical trials networks are large, multidisciplinary collaborations of experts from many different locations. They involve multiple healthcare facilities and practicing clinicians, which means they have the unique ability to deliver large, complex, multinational trials that address a critical need or evidence gap in the Australian healthcare system and their findings are often immediately applicable to improvements in clinical practice and patient care.