

AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

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PROFESSOR JOHN TURNIDGE APPOINTED TO LEAD PROGRAM FOR NATIONAL SURVEILLANCE OF ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE AND ANTIBIOTIC USAGE

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission), today announced the appointment of Professor John Turnidge as a Senior Medical Advisor to lead work on a national surveillance program for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and antibiotic usage (AU).

Under the 2013/14 Australian Federal Budget, the Commission has been funded to coordinate national action to prevent and contain antimicrobial resistance through enhanced surveillance systems.

AMR is a critical health issue, with urgent action being called for by the World Health Organization. In Australia, some resistant bacterial pathogens that were primarily the concern of hospitals are now seen with increasing frequency in the community.

The Commission's Chief Executive Officer, Professor Debora Picone, said "Professor Turnidge is eminently qualified in this field. He has been involved with many high-profile societies and committees both nationally and internationally dealing with issues of antibiotic resistance and its management."

"Professor Turnidge's expert medical advice and leadership will be invaluable to this project and in Australia's response to AMR", Professor Picone added.

The three-year project will enhance surveillance of AMR and AU in Australia and will work toward the establishment of a National Surveillance System for Antimicrobial Resistance and Antibiotic Usage. The project will also support a range of AMR containment strategies and the appropriate use of antibiotics.

The Commission will work with the Department of Health and the public and private health sectors to coordinate existing data collection, analyses and reporting activities for AMR.

Professor John Turnidge

Professor John Turnidge is a senior Staff Specialist, Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, for SA Pathology based at the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide. He is an Infectious Disease Physician and Microbiologist who has had a long career in Adelaide and Melbourne working with antibiotic resistance and appropriate antibiotic use. He is a voting member of the Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing subcommittee of the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (USA), until recently was the Chair of the Australian Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, co-founded the Australian Society for Antimicrobials and is a Past President of the Australian Society for Microbiology. Professor Turnidge also chaired JETACAR (the Joint Expert Technical Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance) and for a time the Expert Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

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.

*Media inquiries can be directed to Priya Malik, Communications Manager, by calling (02) 9126 3605
or email priya.malik@safetyandquality.gov.au*

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