Launch of the Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) launched the Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation yesterday.

The atlas presents a clear picture of substantial variation in healthcare across Australia, in areas such as antibiotic prescribing, surgical, mental health and diagnostic services.

The development of the atlas was a collaboration with the ACSQHC, Australian, state and territory governments, specialist medical colleges, clinicians and consumer representatives.

The Atlas Advisory Group Chair, Professor Anne Duggan, said, "The atlas identifies a number of geographic and clinical areas where marked variation in practice is occurring. This means that people with the same health conditions, concerns, or problems may not be receiving the same care as others, elsewhere, with the same problems".

Professor Michael Cleary, President of the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators, said, "Understanding variation in care is an important first step to improving the quality, value and appropriateness of care. While some variation may be warranted, understanding unwarranted variation presents opportunities for improving the healthcare people receive".

To access the atlas, see www.safetyandquality.gov.au/atlas.

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