

Media release

Thursday 16 November 2023

Report shows pharmacist antimicrobial stewardship critical to combating AMR (Antimicrobial Resistance)

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) welcomes the findings of the [Fifth Australian report on antimicrobial use and resistance in human health](#) (AURA 2023) released today by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care noting the importance of pharmacist-led antimicrobial stewardships to combating antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Included in the AURA 2023 report is a [resource to support pharmacists working across primary \(community and aged care\) and acute care \(hospital\) settings](#) supported by data analyses from the Antimicrobial Use and Resistance in Australia Surveillance System (AURA). Among its key findings, the report found that the rate of antimicrobial resistant infections in residential aged care settings was as high as, or higher than, rates in hospitals for *Enterobacterales* and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), while antimicrobial use in Australian hospitals is some of the highest in the world alongside low rates of compliance with antimicrobial prescribing guidelines in private hospitals.

SHPA President Tom Simpson says the findings demonstrate the need to embed pharmacists into aged care services to support the judicious and appropriate use of antimicrobials while further reinforcing that all public and private hospitals need dedicated antimicrobial stewardship pharmacists.

‘At SHPA we have, and continue to champion the multiple Standards and Strategies published by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care to help clinicians and health services reduce the impact of antimicrobial resistance.

‘The human and financial cost of doing nothing is significant. WHO has declared AMR one of the top global public health threats with misuse and overuse of antimicrobials being one of the main drivers in the development of drug-resistant pathogens.

‘Without effective antimicrobials, the success of modern medicine in treating infections, including during major surgery and cancer chemotherapy, would be at increased risk.

‘Further, patients will likely endure prolonged illness resulting in longer hospital stays, the need for more expensive medicines and causing significant financial challenges for those impacted.

‘To combat this rising threat to humanity, I call on every hospital – both public and private – to implement pharmacist-led antimicrobial stewardship services and all aged care settings to integrate an on-site aged care pharmacist within their health care teams.’

‘Antimicrobial stewardship services work, with AURA 2023 showing that there has been an improvement in the appropriateness of prescribing in public hospitals which is attributed to the development and implementation of the antimicrobial stewardship programs in these settings.’

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,100+ Hospital Pharmacists, and their Hospital Pharmacist Intern and Hospital Pharmacy Technician colleagues working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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