



Position

The RACGP supports a collaborative multi-sectorial approach to ensure appropriate antimicrobial use and efforts to reduce antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Australia.

The RACGP supports the primacy of patient safety and endorses those interventions which prevent antimicrobial resistance whilst minimising harm, morbidity and mortality from infectious disease.

Antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) programs developed for hospitals cannot simply be implemented in general practice, which is less hierarchical than secondary care and characterised by special pressures and concerns. Tailored approaches will have to be developed to assist GPs.

Background

AMR is a significant global and Australian health issue. Global and local efforts are needed to conserve antibiotic effectiveness, and to contain and reduce AMR.

The RACGP agrees that comprehensive, coordinated and effective surveillance of AMR and antimicrobial use is a national priority. A unified and strategic approach to addressing the problem is necessary. The Australian Government's 'One Health' approach for addressing antimicrobial resistance across the human and animal health, food and agriculture sectors is supported.

The RACGP supports the primacy of patient safety and endorses those interventions which prevent AMR whilst minimising harm, morbidity and mortality from infectious disease. This will require selective interventions, with appropriate surveillance systems to monitor patient outcomes, antimicrobial use and AMR patterns.

The RACGP acknowledges regional variations that lead to different antimicrobial utilisation, and maintains that little is understood regarding the complexity and uncertainties surrounding antibiotic prescribing in community settings. There is an urgent need to gather community prescribing data, and to meaningfully analyse it to drive improvement activities.

The RACGP believes that community based strategies to reduce antimicrobial use provides an opportunity to reduce the spread of AMR. General practice has a major role to play in maintaining antibiotics effectiveness, in addition to educating the public on their appropriate use and emerging resistance. The RACGP is committed to helping GPs to deal with expectations, change management and implementing new initiatives to reduce antibiotic usage where safe to do so.

AMS programs in general practice may influence positive change across the health sector. However, such programs are currently underdeveloped in general practice, and will require a different approach from hospital-based antimicrobial initiatives. Specific resourcing is needed to develop AMS programs for primary care.

Related policies and documents

[RACGP response to antimicrobial resistance in primary care – November 2017](#)