

Evaluating Australia's National Strategy for Quality use of Medicines: Results of Indicator Measurements 1992-2003

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Australia's National Strategy for Quality Use of Medicines was first established in 1992

The strategy sets out a definition, principles and a conceptual and strategic framework for achieving quality use of medicines. The framework is based in behavioural science and health education and supported by evidence of strategies that have proven effective in improving use of medicines and expert opinion



The Pharmaceutical Health and Rational Use of Medicines (PHARM) Committee, is Australia's expert advisory committee on quality use of medicines, responsible for overseeing the implementation and evaluation of the National Strategy for Quality Use of Medicines

The approach advocated involved multiple strategies implemented within the six key building blocks and targeting all groups whose activities influence medication use (see Figure 2).

Specific resources were identified which required development including medication review services, academic detailing, medication disposal services, consumer education, objective information, campaigns, medication records, educational curricula, compliance aids, model practices and multi-disciplinary activities. Most of these services and resources were not available in Australia in 1992.

Figure 1 The National Strategy for Quality Use of Medicines <http://www.health.gov.au/nmp/quality.htm>

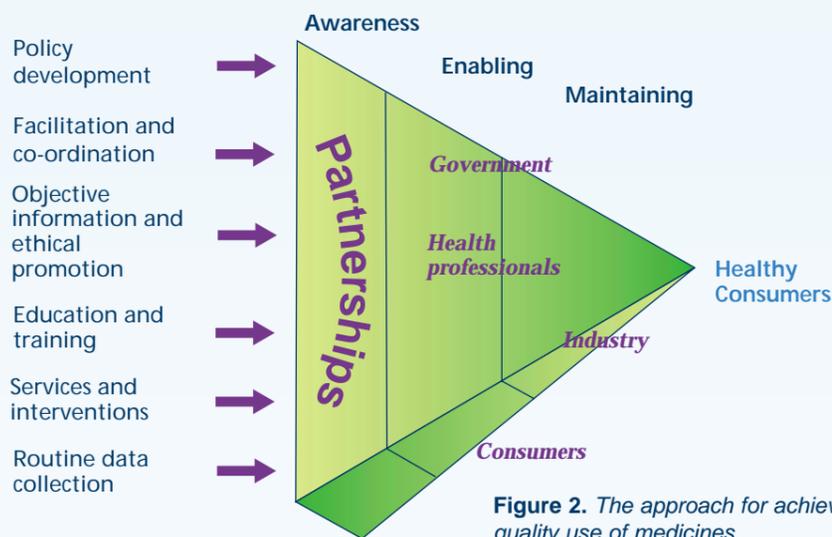
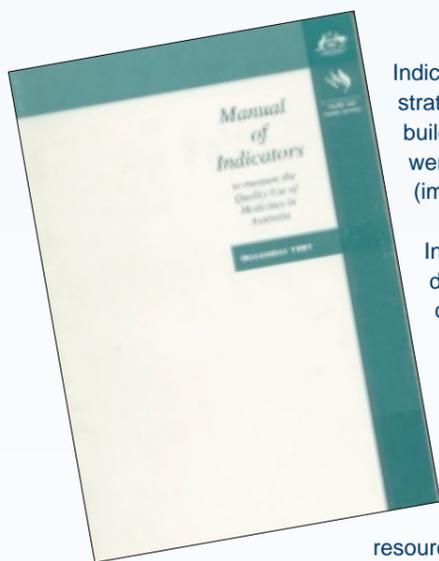


Figure 2. The approach for achieving quality use of medicines

(below) **Figure 3** Manual of Indicators <http://www.nmp.health.gov.au/pdf/manualqum.pdf>



Indicators were developed in 1993 to mirror the national strategy framework. The indicators address all key building blocks, all partners, all stages of learning. They were designed to monitor process, impact and outcomes (implementation and effect) of the National Strategy

Indicators monitor the service and resource development, participation or reach of services, changes in awareness, knowledge and behaviours, changes in medication use and changes in health outcomes.

Indicators have been measured in 1998 and in 2003.

Effective implementation

Some of the Quality Use of Medicines services and resources now operating nationally in Australia

National Prescribing Service
Including academic detailing, prescriber feedback, clinical audits, case studies, information services www.nps.org.au

Home Medication Review Services
http://www.hic.gov.au/providers/incentives_allowances/pharmacy_agreement/about_hmr.htm

National Medication Disposal Service <http://www.returnmed.com.au>

Australian Medicines Handbook <http://www.amh.net.au/>

Therapeutic Guidelines <http://www.tg.com.au/home/index.html>

Australian Prescriber <http://www.australianprescriber.com/>

National Practice Guidelines
Guidelines for medication management in aged care facilities <http://www.health.gov.au/nmp/pdf/resguide.pdf>
National Guidelines to achieve the continuum of quality use of medicines between hospital and the community <http://www.health.gov.au/nmp/pdf/naguqum.pdf>

Consumer Medicines Information
<http://www.health.gov.au/nmp/pdf/cmi.pdf>

Consumer Education Initiative www.nps.org.au

Some Impacts and Outcomes of the implementation of the National Strategy for Quality Use of Medicines

In 2003

- 60% of consumers reported receiving written information with their last new medicine
- 70% of consumers think it inappropriate to use antibiotics for colds or flu
- 50% of consumers asked questions of their doctor the last time they were prescribed a new medicine
- 127,000 (85%) residents in aged care facilities were provided with medication review services
- Over 20,000 home medication reviews have been conducted
- Over 90 % of divisions of general practice participating in quality use of medicines activities
- Over 80% of primary care practitioners receiving prescriber feedback
- 50% of general practitioners participating in at least one interactive National Prescribing Services activity
- 10% of all primary care practitioners completed antibiotic audits in 2001 and in 2002
- 12% of primary care practitioners receiving academic detailing services
- 60% of health professionals are receiving Australian Prescriber

Antibiotic Use: Australia 1992 - 2003

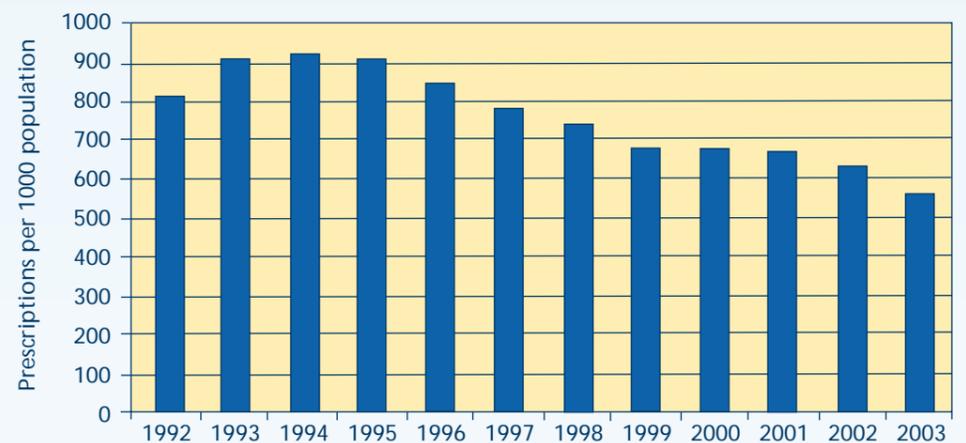


Figure 4 Falling antibiotic use in Australia

- Over 60% of pharmacists report using the Australian Medicines Handbook
- Over 60% of general practitioners report using Antibiotic Guidelines
- Over 240 tonnes of unwanted medicines collected and disposed of appropriately
- Antibiotic use has been improving (figures 4 & 5)
- Hospitalisation rates for asthma and gastrointestinal bleeds are falling.

Lessons Learned

- Indicators have been useful for identifying successes and gaps in implementation, thus informing strategic action plans
- Articulation of essential quality use of medicines activities in the national strategy and the manual of indicators has led to their prioritization for research funding and activity.
- Continuous feedback through a number of different channels and in a number of different formats has been essential
- Results have been useful for providing ongoing evidence of the need for and effectiveness of the national strategy for quality use of medicines

Antibiotic prescribing for upper respiratory tract infections

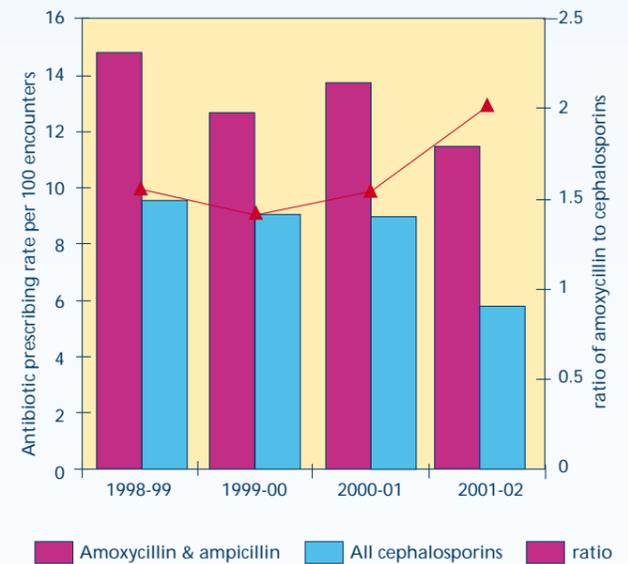


Figure 5 More appropriate prescribing for upper respiratory tract infections



Figures 6, 7 & 8