

Options for implementation of Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) in primary care:

Pharmacy

This document provides guidance for healthcare services to support the implementation of antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) programs in pharmacy.

The guidance should be considered in the context of local requirements and policies. **Table 1** below outlines strategies that could be implemented to demonstrate that a healthcare service meets the AMS actions of the **National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards** (Primary and Community Healthcare Standards).

Table 1: Options for implementation in Pharmacy settings

| AMS program elements with relevant Primary and Community Healthcare Standards Actions | Implementation in Pharmacy settings |
|--|---|
| Action 3.14a | |
| Provides healthcare providers with access to, and promotes the use of, current evidence-based Australian therapeutic guidelines and resources on antimicrobial prescribing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that pharmacists have access to recommended guidelines readily accessible. Guidelines will promote the safe and efficacious use of antimicrobials; this may be by review of prescriptions or the provision of non-prescription antimicrobials. Examples of guidelines include Therapeutic Guidelines eTG or the Australian Medicines Handbook (AMH). |
| Action 3.14b | |
| Incorporates core elements, recommendations and principles from the current Antimicrobial Stewardship Clinical Care Standard into service delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QS1 – Pharmacists recognise when a patient needs referral to an acute care facility e.g., hospital or general practitioner QS2 – see above 3.14a QS3 – Patient allergies/ hypersensitivity/ intolerances are appropriately documented in dispensing software. Allergy |

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| AMS program elements with relevant Primary and Community Healthcare Standards Actions | Implementation in Pharmacy settings |
|--|---|
| <p>Note: not all Quality Statements (Qs) from the Antimicrobial Stewardship Clinical Care Standard will be relevant</p> | <p>status should be discussed with patients when they are dispensed antimicrobials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QS5 – Patients are counselled when prescribed antimicrobials as outlined in this QS • QS6 – Prescription and non-prescription (when appropriate) antimicrobials are documented in the pharmacy dispensing software and/or e-health record. • QS7 – Any antimicrobial prescription is regularly reviewed, particularly if prescribed for an extended duration. <p>The cautionary advisory label used by pharmacists for antibiotics (Label D) has now changed to ‘Take for [the number of] days as advised by your prescriber’.</p> <p>The label has changed because taking antibiotics for longer than necessary does not improve outcomes and increases the risk of acquiring resistant bacterial strains. The required duration of treatment with an antibiotic may need a smaller quantity of antibiotic than the pack that is supplied to the patient; therefore, reminding patients that they may not need to take the whole pack becomes an even more important message.</p> |
| <p>Action 3.14c</p> | |
| <p>Supports healthcare providers who prescribe antimicrobials to review compliance of antimicrobial prescribing against current local or Australian therapeutic guidelines</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacists should seek opportunities to clarify the indication for antimicrobials, assess if the prescription is in line with Therapeutic Guidelines or another evidence-based guideline or directed by microbiology testing and discuss any variation with prescribers. |
| <p>Action 3.14d</p> | |
| <p>Supports healthcare providers to identify the areas of improvement and takes action to increase the appropriateness of antimicrobial usage</p> | <p>AMS in primary care pharmacies encompasses multiple activities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying common situations with a high likelihood for inappropriate use and engaging with patients. e.g. a patient asking whether they need antimicrobials for a cold or flu. • Querying an antimicrobial repeat prescription presented for dispensing > 1 month after initial prescription (suggesting a new episode of infection). |

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| AMS program elements with relevant Primary and Community Healthcare Standards Actions | Implementation in Pharmacy settings |
|---|---|
| Action 3.14 e | |
| Has mechanisms to educate consumers about the risks, benefits, and alternatives to antimicrobials for their condition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials available to educate patients on antimicrobial resistance and use of antimicrobials. • Utilise Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) leaflets • See the consumer pamphlet Do I really need antibiotics? |
| Specialised Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antimicrobial Stewardship in Australian Health Care (AMS Book) Chapter 11 - Role of the pharmacist and pharmacy services in antimicrobial stewardship • Australian Pharmaceutical Formulary (APF) and Handbook |

For more information, please visit: [National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards](#)

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