

# Annual Evaluation Report 2016

## Executive Summary

NPS MedicineWise continues to explore consumer and health professional beliefs, knowledge and attitudes and to evaluate programs and activities to inform improvements and efficiencies in our work. Evaluation work follows the guiding principles of the MedicineWise Evaluation Framework, 2013–17.

We continue to demonstrate the impact of NPS MedicineWise programs on prescribers of medicines. This year, using a Bayesian hierarchical time series approach, we were able to demonstrate the impact of our antibiotic resistance campaigns with a 16% reduction in antibiotic dispensing by GPs for upper respiratory tract infections for concessional patients under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) supply for the period July 2012 to July 2015. Our reported savings for the PBS for 2015/16, due to the impact of seven programs, was \$75.21 million.

Optimising the use of inhaled medicines in people with asthma by educating health professionals was successful, with 97% of GPs having a positive attitude towards discussing adherence to treatment with patients and taking responsibility for assessing and demonstrating inhaler technique. Our evaluation of MedicineInsight found that the MedicineInsight practice report is easy to understand (94%) and useful in helping GPs to improve the care delivered to their patients (89%).

Our work with pharmacists included the successful pilot of the New Medicine Support Service in nine pharmacies in three states to improve patient adherence to medicines. The positive findings from the pilot have informed the implementation of this approach where pharmacists support patients starting a new medicine with an intervention and follow-up meeting, either by telephone or face-to-face.

Our surveys of pharmacists and nurses found a high level of satisfaction with online learning with most reporting a positive impact on their awareness of resources, guidelines, clinical knowledge and patient management.

Choosing Wisely Australia exceeded expectations in its first year with 67% of medical colleges and societies signing up, and the initiative receiving extensive media coverage. Both GPs and consumers reported becoming more actively involved in decision making and sharing about the need for medical tests, treatment or procedures. Our consumer survey found that 71% of respondents believed that people play a role in reducing the use of unnecessary medical tests.

Our consumer survey explored adherence to medicines with 33% reporting high adherence to medicines overall compared to only 17% of those receiving medicine for depression.

Our reported savings for the MBS for 2015/16 was \$19.3 million due to the reduction in GP referrals for vitamin B12/folate tests. Our cost-benefit analysis of the *Imaging for Acute Low Back Pain* program found that for every \$1 spent on the program, \$82 was gained in monetary value. The impact of radiation exposure reduction on population cancer risk was estimated to be an averted excess lifetime risk of 36 incident cancers.

This year we conducted a meeting to discuss Biosimilars with rheumatologists, GPs and community pharmacists to assist with the design of a program addressing rheumatoid arthritis.

We continue to provide up-to-date information for our audiences through our publications and website. Our change over to a digital Australian Prescriber was positive, with 80% of readers either willing to sign up or already signed up for the digital journal.

The evaluation of the 2016 National Medicines Symposium (NMS) found that the event included several excellent presenters, and that the learning outcomes for the majority of participants were either entirely or partially met. NMS is a unique cross-disciplinary event held biennially by NPS MedicineWise, which provides an opportunity for experts from across Australia, and the globe, to come together and discuss both local and international issues relating to quality use of medicines and medical tests. Delegates at NMS 2016 included clinicians, policy makers, researchers, academics, students, industry representatives, consumers and government officials, allowing more comprehensive conversations to take place.

For more information please contact Suzanne Blogg, Evaluation Manager NPS MedicineWise, on [sblogg@nps.org.au](mailto:sblogg@nps.org.au)

