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## Objectives

An effective hospital-wide antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) program requires engagement with all healthcare professionals involved in antimicrobial use. It is therefore useful to consider attitudes towards antimicrobial resistance, antimicrobial prescribing and proposed AMS interventions prior to program implementation.

## Methods

A 26-item attitudinal survey was distributed to visiting specialists, nurses and pharmacists at a large (500 bed) private hospital in Melbourne. Survey questions utilised a 'Yes/No' responses and a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Descriptive analyses were performed and chi-squared tests conducted.

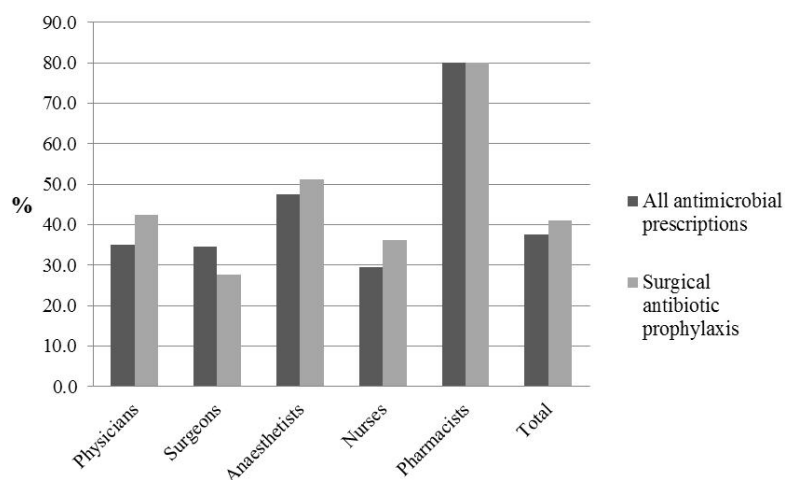
## Results

There were a total of 331 respondents (80 physicians, 58 surgeons, 78 anaesthetists, 105 nurses and 10 pharmacists).

A larger proportion of respondents believed that antimicrobial resistance was a serious problem in other hospitals compared to their own ( $p < 0.001$ ). Fifty eight percent agreed that improving prescribing at the hospital would reduce antimicrobial resistance.

Eighty per cent of pharmacists believed there the majority of antimicrobial prescribed for general use and surgical prophylaxis in the hospital was not compliant with national prescribing guidelines (Figure 1). These proportions of surveyed pharmacists were significantly higher compared to the other professions ( $p = 0.007$  and  $p = 0.019$ , respectively).

Figure 1: Estimation of 50% or greater non-compliance with  
*Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic (2010)*



Twenty nine percent of respondents had previous exposure to AMS, with pharmacists and physicians more likely to have heard of AMS compared to surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses ( $p = 0.016$  and  $p < 0.001$  respectively).

Just 50.5% of respondents were willing to participate in proposed AMS interventions, but notably all surveyed pharmacists responded positively ( $p = 0.002$ ).

## Conclusion

Pre-existing awareness of issues around AMS was low among respondents. This study highlights the challenge of making antimicrobial resistance a local issue and engaging staff prior to implementing change. In particular, nursing staff, surgeons and anaesthetists had low levels of awareness and should be targeted for education. Conversely, pharmacists represent likely proponents of any newly introduced stewardship program.