

Partnering with consumers for the development of antimicrobial patient information

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Background

The Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) Clinical Care Standard, released by the Australian Commission on Quality and Safety in Health Care, stipulates that information about a patient's antibiotic therapy should be discussed with the patient and/or their carer at the time of prescription.

Manufacturers' consumer medicines information is lengthy and can be complex to understand, therefore an alternative approach is likely to be beneficial.

The National Standards for hospital accreditation state that AMS programs must incorporate core elements from the current AMS Clinical Care Standard.



Image 1: Quality statement 5 from the AMS Clinical Care Standard

Description

Our objective was to partner with consumers in the development of antimicrobial information leaflets which could be provided to patients, taking into consideration the health literacy of our patient population.

We wanted written information in simple language to support discussion with healthcare providers and improve patient engagement in, and understanding of, their treatment.

This was an opportunity for our AMS committee consumer representative to become more involved in AMS activities.

Action

Antimicrobial medicines were selected for inclusion based on:

- frequency of use
- risk of toxicity
- likelihood of prolonged therapy after hospital discharge
- availability of information for patients

The content was initially written by an AMS pharmacist, clinical pharmacist and Infectious Diseases physician. The leaflets were then co-designed by the AMS Committee (with stakeholders including nurses, pharmacists, doctors and consumers).

The hospital procedure for writing patient leaflets was followed. They were written in plain English language that is short, simple and direct; each leaflet was one A4 page long.

Readability statistics in Microsoft Word[®] were used to identify the level of education a person would need to understand the information.

Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Score	Flesch Reading Ease scale
This score is rated on US grade school levels. A recommended readability score is 7 or less.	This is a score out of 100. The higher the score the easier a document is to understand. Aim for a score of 60-70 (understood by 12 to 15 years olds).

Table 1: Readability scoring scales from Microsoft Word

It was difficult to achieve the recommended scores due to the need to include some complex medical terminology. Less punctuation, sentences <25 words, and shorter words helped to improve the score.

Evaluation

Each leaflet was reviewed by at least five consumers with structured written feedback provided in the form of a short survey.

1. I think the brochure is... (please circle)

😊	😐	😞
easy to understand	OK to understand	hard to understand
very useful	useful	not useful
the right amount of information	not enough information	too much information

Image 2: The first question of our consumer survey

Example questions from the consumer survey:

- What parts did you find most useful?
- What parts did you find least useful?
- Did the brochure use words you did not understand?
- Did it tell you what you needed to know?
- Would you like to read this in another language?
- How would you prefer to get a copy of this brochure?
- Do you have any other suggestions for improving this brochure?

Summary of consumer feedback:

- 45 patients provided feedback on the leaflets
- 84% found them easy to understand and very useful
- Only 2 patients identified words they didn't understand
- 6 patients stated they would like to read this in another language
- They preferred to receive this information from a staff member who can explain it to them, along with their discharge medication

Consumer feedback was reviewed and incorporated into the final versions of the leaflets where appropriate.

So far, leaflets have been developed for the following antimicrobials:

- rifampicin and fusidic acid, in combination
- rifampicin, alone (see Image 3)
- ciprofloxacin
- linezolid
- pristinamycin
- amoxicillin+clavulanate
- clindamycin
- trimethoprim+sulfamethoxazole
- oseltamivir
- fosfomycin

The leaflets are available on the hospital intranet for access by clinicians at the time of prescribing, and for pharmacists to provide to inpatients, outpatients, or upon discharge.

Translation, and suitability for different cultural groups was not in scope but there could be opportunity in the future.

Rifampicin



- Rifampicin is an antibiotic to treat your infection. It will always be prescribed in combination with another antibiotic.
- Take this antibiotic every day until the treatment course is complete, to ensure that your infection clears completely and your symptoms do not return.
- Rifampicin needs to be dispensed from your hospital pharmacy. If you are running out of rifampicin and your course is meant to continue for longer, contact your prescribing doctor at the hospital for another prescription.

How do I take rifampicin?

You doctor will tell you how much to take, and how long to take rifampicin for. Follow all directions given to you by your doctor or pharmacist carefully. Rifampicin works best if it is taken on an empty stomach. This means you should take it at least 30 minutes before or two hours after food. Swallow the capsules whole with a glass of water.

What are the side effects of rifampicin?

You may experience some side effects when taking rifampicin:

- The most common side effect is that it may cause your urine, tears, saliva and sweat to turn a red-orange colour. This is harmless and nothing for you to worry about. If you wear soft contact lenses, rifampicin may cause your lenses to become discoloured. If this affects you, speak with your doctor or optician. They may advise you to wear glasses instead.
- A rare but serious side effect is that it can stop your liver working properly. You may have blood tests before and during treatment to check for this. Early signs of liver problems include loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, and stomach pain. If you have these symptoms and they are severe or ongoing, or if you get yellowing of the eyes or skin (jaundice), contact your doctor immediately.

What do I need to be aware of while I am taking rifampicin?

Always tell your doctor and pharmacist about other medicines you are currently taking, including herbal medicines and over-the-counter medicines.

Image 3: An example extract from one information leaflet

Implications

Patient information leaflets can support clinicians to discuss antimicrobial therapy with patients at the time of prescribing in a manner that they can understand, as required in the AMS Clinical Care Standard.

A partnership has been established with the National Centre for Antimicrobial Stewardship to make similar leaflets more widely available.