

CULTURE-AL GROWTH: A Pharmacist-led Pilot of Surgical Antimicrobial Stewardship Rounds

Laura Triggs AMS Pharmacist
Karlee Johnston, Stephanie Fournier, Dr Milton Micallef Canberra Health Services, ACT

Background

Routine surveillance by the Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) team identified an opportunity to optimise antimicrobial prescribing in the Acute Surgical Unit (ASU).

Objectives

Improve surgical antimicrobial prescribing

Assess feasibility and value of the service

Build rapport between AMS and surgery

Action

Pharmacist-led weekly AMS round implemented for 1 month in June 2023

Face-to-Face AMS round included surgical team, ASU pharmacist and AMS pharmacist

43 patients' antimicrobial needs were discussed during pilot

Multiple recommendations for therapy changes were made by AMS pharmacist

Pre- and post-prescribing data, and participant feedback, were collected and analysed

Patient example:

Patient admitted with complicated perforated appendicitis. Underwent washout and drainage.

Prescribed: IV Ceftriaxone + Metronidazole

Recent history: ESBL *E. coli* urinary tract infection 2 weeks prior (S: gentamicin, R: ceftriaxone)

Recommended:

Switch to IV Ampicillin, Gentamicin, Metronidazole

Send surgical samples

Gentamicin level 6-8 h post dose for subsequent dosing recommendations

Results

43 Patients reviewed

57 Recommendations made

93% Recommendations accepted & actioned

Recommendations made:

11 Intravenous to oral switches

12 Therapeutic drug monitoring

16 Optimisation of empiric therapy

18 Cessation or shortened duration of therapy

Prescriber feedback:

"Very good. Concise and quick."

"The sessions I attended were informative and useful. This should continue!"

"I appreciate the culture change that pharmacy are promoting."

Discussion

This pilot reinforces the critical role of AMS in supporting appropriate antimicrobial prescribing. It led to increased adherence to guideline-based therapy and was valued by the surgical team.

Future directions include expanding to other surgical specialties and supporting ward pharmacists to lead AMS rounds. This initiative has the potential to shape future practices and optimise antimicrobial use.