

# NHMRC Partnership Pathology

## STAKEHOLDER FORUM REPORT – 11 MAY 2016

The NHMRC Partnership Pathology Stakeholder Forum took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2016, at Prince of Wales Private Hospital. It was a great success, bringing together more than 30 representatives from 14 different stakeholder organisations including the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC), South Eastern Area Laboratory Services (SEALS) Pathology, Health Consumers NSW, Clinical Excellence Commission, Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia, Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association, Prince of Wales Hospital (PoWH), St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney Children's Hospitals, Liverpool Hospital, Diabetes Australia, CanSpeak, MDA National and Spok.

### PARTNERSHIP PANEL

In an engaging and thought-provoking panel session, project partners, along with clinician and consumer stakeholders, discussed current issues relating to test result management.

Dr Robert Herkes (Clinical Director, ACSQHC) informed the audience that “There are currently unresolved issues around what is an abnormal test result and when does an alert for these tests need to be made. The Commission’s role is to understand how results are communicated to both doctors and patients, and how this can be improved.”



Partnership Panel; on stage left to right: A/Prof Robert Lindeman (SEALS), Dr Robert Herkes (ACSQHC).

A/Prof Robert Lindeman (Network Director SEALS Pathology) talked about “SEALS’ wish to examine ‘open and effective’ communication channels to deliver effective patient care,” but also mentioned the “complexity of how to communicate the test results because patients are different and tests are different.”

His colleague Prof Rita Horvath (Clinical Director at SEALS Department of Clinical Chemistry) added that the “Question remains about what is a critical result and what should we be reporting to our doctors.”



Partnership Panel; on stage left to right: Dr Michael Legg (Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia), Dr Graham Jones (St Vincent's Hospital), Prof A. Rita Horvath (SEALS).

Anthony Brown (Executive Director, Health Consumers NSW) explained that “involving consumers in the care process leads to more efficient and effective health services.” Supporting his argument, Betty Johnson AO (Chair, Health Consumers NSW) emphasised that “consumers can add what it feels to be the patient. That is the real value of consumer engagement, where can you get this information [other] than from the patients themselves?”



Partnership Panel; on stage left to right: Ms Betty Johnson AO (Health Consumers NSW), Mr Anthony Brown (Health Consumers NSW), Dr Patrick Bolton (PoWH).

## WORKSHOP

The points raised during the panel and other crucial issues were addressed in the workshop discussion.



Workshop discussion (clockwise from the left): A/Prof Joanne Callen (CHSSR), A/Prof Robert Lindeman (SEALS), A/Prof Andrew Georgiou (CHSSR), Dr Sradha Kotwal (PoWH), Mr Arthur Haycraft (Spok), Ms Margaret Allen (PoWH, Sydney Children's Hospitals), Ms Betty Johnson AO (Health Consumers NSW).

The audience believed that there are gaps and discontinuities in test result management which pose a risk to patient safety. In particular there was concern that:

- Test results are not efficiently communicated to doctors, patients and across the health spectrum.
- The lines of responsibility and accountability are often stretched too thin, with particular shortcomings during handover and discharge, and with limited options for transfer of responsibilities with shift changes
- There is too much variation in the way results are reported.
- The current IT Systems are not integrated and do not facilitate communication between different IT systems, across wards or between hospital based and community based clinicians.
- Consumer engagement is inconsistent across the different health services. Consumers are not part of a partnership in test results management.



Workshop discussion (left to right): Ms Mary Potter (Health Consumer NSW), Ms Allyson Alker (MDA National), Ms Anne Axam (CEC), Dr Ling Li (CHSSR), Prof A. Rita Horvath (SEALS), Dr Euan McCaughey (CHSSR), Mr Prashan Malalasekera (ACSQHC)



Workshop discussion (left to right): Ms Katherine Silk (Australian Healthcare and Hospital Association), Mr John Stubbs (CanSpeak), Ms Cate Malone (CEC), Dr Graham Jones (St Vincent's Hospital).

The workshop discussions also revealed new strategies that could facilitate safer and effective test result communication, management and follow-up:

- Health IT can be a factor, but only if it enhances communication, responsibility and partnership.
- Test result management is context-dependent and may differ for each test, the clinical setting, the clinician and the patient. Reporting structures need to be standardised to avoid confusion among clinicians and patients.
- Test result management needs to be flexible enough to provide context-specific critical results values, for instance in the ICU.
- Patient access to test result (if desired) offers opportunities for improved partnership, satisfaction and compliance.

The contributions to the stakeholder forum will prove invaluable as the project progresses.



Workshop discussion (left to right): Mr Anthony Brown (Health Consumers NSW), Dr Robert Herkes (ACSQHC), Ms Julie Li (CHSSR), Ms Leshae Johnston (PoWH), Dr Michael Legg (Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia).

The research team would like to thank all attendees for their support and active collaboration.

### FIND OUT MORE

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