

Title. Was the Australian National Hand Hygiene Initiative Worthwhile?

The value of new initiatives to improve hand hygiene compliance over and above the large gains already made since the 1990's is not known. The objective of this research is to estimate the cost-effectiveness of the Australian National Hand Hygiene Initiative implemented between 2009 and 2012. A study was conducted on 1 294 656 inpatients to the 50 largest Australian acute hospitals. The data came from surveillance of healthcare-associated infection, surveys administered to hospital workers, patient records, administrative data sets, published literature, and Australian life tables. Three primary outcomes were estimated: change to the number of cases of healthcare associated *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemia; change to years of life among the inpatient cohort; and, change to total health services cost. Improving hand hygiene compliance might often be a sensible policy goal. But in this case the Australian National Hand Hygiene Programme cost more than it saved and the health benefits were modest. The value of other infection control activities displaced by improving hand hygiene compliance should be considered by policy makers.

About the Speaker

Nicholas Graves is an NHMRC senior research fellow and is developing health services research in Queensland with nationally competitive grants and by managing the Australian Centre for Health Services Innovation (AusHSI). He is motivated by research that improves health services. He has published in good journals like *Nature*, *JAMA*, *BMJ*, *AIDS*, *Lancet Infectious Diseases*, *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, *Clinical Infectious Diseases* and *Health Economics*. He has received \$25M in research funding since 2004 mostly from international and national competitive schemes.