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New EPiC Antibiotics dashboard available now

EPiC Antibiotics, published by Pharmac-sponsored educators He Ako Hiringa, is now available online and highlights some areas in primary care that continue to see inappropriate use of antimicrobials, including treatment of urinary tract infection, unwarranted seasonal variation in antibiotic use, overuse of amoxicillin + clavulanic acid, and the use of topical antibiotics.

What the national data show

We have identified three national problems of antibiotic prescribing practice for primary care consideration:

Urinary tract infection

- Nitrofurantoin is now the preferred first-line option for empiric treatment of uncomplicated UTI. Although trimethoprim is still available as an alternative option, there are significant rates of *E. coli* resistance in some parts of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- For uncomplicated lower UTI in women, nitrofurantoin (preferably the modified release formulation) is recommended as a five-day course. However, national data for the last 12 months show that over one third (39 per cent) of all dispensings of nitrofurantoin to women for lower UTI, were for a seven-day course.

Amoxicillin + clavulanic acid

- There are very few first-line indications for amoxicillin + clavulanic acid, yet it is the second most dispensed antibiotic after amoxicillin. Approximately one fifth of all dispensings of antibiotics in the previous 12 months were for amoxicillin + clavulanic acid.
- Rates of amoxicillin + clavulanic acid use vary by ethnicity. By proportion of population, Pacific peoples had the highest use, with 1 in 10 (just under 10 per cent) being dispensed amoxicillin + clavulanic acid in the last 12 months.

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- There is unwarranted seasonal variation in antibiotic use, 32 per cent, between summer and winter over the last year. This is likely, at least partially, to reflect inappropriate use of antibiotics for winter viral illnesses.

Topical antibiotics

- There are very few indications that require topical antibiotics. If a skin infection requires an antibiotic, it should be given orally.
- Wide use of fusidic acid in New Zealand has led to high rates of resistance. Use has declined over the last few years, but it is possible to reduce this further.
- There are still some groups in our population who have inappropriately high rates of fusidic acid dispensing, including increasing use in children under five years and continued high use in people aged over 75 years.

Accessing EPiC

Prescriber, practice, and national data can be viewed at <http://www.epic.akohiringa.co.nz>. Prescribers are required to create an EPiC account to see their individual report.

A demonstration version of the dashboard, showing the prescriber and practice view is available at epic-demo.akohiringa.co.nz.

Data to 31 August 2022 are currently showing in EPiC and updates occur quarterly.

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Our staff are available for an EPiC walk through or to provide charts and illustrations.

He Ako Hiringa EPiC is produced by [Matui Limited](#).