

'The latest issue of the *Australian Health Review*, the academic journal of the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA), examines the various responses and impacts on health organisations during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020,' says Editor-in-Chief, Professor Sonj Hall.

'A perspectives piece from Nigel Lyons, Cathryn Cox and Vanessa Clements from NSW Health provides practical insights into the value of clinical leadership and engagement in a time of crisis. It describes the role of COVID-19 Communities of Practice, what they have achieved and their importance in supporting the ongoing pandemic response in New South Wales.

'Dr Rachael Smithson, Elisha Roech and Christina Wicker from Gold Coast University Hospital examined patient and provider experiences of virtual care during COVID-19 to provide a way forward to further develop models of virtual care. The results from their evaluation demonstrated the value and viability of virtual care.

'A study undertaken by Dr Sarah Holten et al assessed the psychological well-being of Australian hospital clinical staff during the pandemic and found that targeted well-being interventions are required to support hospital staff during the current and future outbreaks of infectious diseases and other crises.

'Australia's research response to the pandemic is considered in a paper by Dr Eley et al in which it is discussed how Australia swiftly responded and diverted funding to appropriately fast-track research and knowledge dissemination. Dr Eley and colleagues also provide recommendations on the imperative to grow and maintain Australia's clinician scientist workforce to maintain sufficient pandemic preparedness and to continue making discoveries to improve the health of Australians.

The journal also looks at various aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, a timely theme as we wrap up Reconciliation Week 2021.

'A study conducted by Dr Neil Orr et al found disparities in the utilisation of the Child Dental Benefits Schedule between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. The study found lower levels of the use of preventive services amongst Aboriginal children which may indicate future inequalities in oral health.

'Laura Stuart, Dr Lara Kimmel and Andrew Jolly examined the incidence of lower limb amputation in Central Australia and found that Aboriginal women undergoing renal dialysis were disproportionately represented. They called for further research into culturally safe prevention, early detection and management of diabetic foot ulceration to reduce the rates of lower limb amputation.

'Little is known about out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure (OOPHE) impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. In a study, Dr Ryder et al modified an OOPHE survey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households with children and found the introduction of contextual factors to the pre-existing survey was impractical. While the modified survey contained useful questions, the authors recommended that future OOPHE surveys should be developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the outset.

Other articles in this issue focus on the implications of workforce skill mix on efficiency and an assessment of machine learning to predict unplanned hospital readmissions.

The June issue of the *Australian Health Review* is available [here](#). This media release is available [online](#).

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the national peak body for public and not-for-profit hospitals, Primary Health Networks, and community and primary healthcare services.