

Hospital Acquired Complications (HACs) are a type of patient harm associated with increased morbidity and mortality, and while they can have devastating long-term effects on patients, with the right clinical care using risk mitigation strategies can largely be prevented.

‘Despite being preventable, HACs occurred in over 146,000 hospitalisations in Australia in the 2022 financial year and significantly increased hospital costs and length of stay for patients,’ said AHHA Acting Chief Executive Adj AProf Rebecca Haddock.

‘This [latest Issues Brief](#) released today by AHHA’s Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research, explores how by improving data collection and use, we could help reduce HACs and deliver better outcomes that matter to patients,’ continued Professor Haddock.

The use of clinical risk mitigation strategies is vital and embedded in the processes of hospital care. However, when it comes to the prevention of HACs, resources are lacking, and there are limitations in their clinical use.

‘A key factor in improving our prevention strategies for HACs is timely and accurate data, as well as standardisation of how this data is collected and published.’

‘There are substantial delays in the publication of data for HACs, as of 2024, the national data is out-of-date and published across multiple websites.’

‘As a result of this lack of standardisation, outdated data and fractured publication, clinicians and hospitals are currently unable to effectively evaluate and compare performance or identify specific areas in need of improvement.’

‘The publication of HAC data can also provide valuable information to inform patient choice, particularly around the selection of care providers and potential treatment options.

‘In order to improve patients’ access and understanding of HAC information, consumers should be involved in the co-design of the presentation of data, and how it is accessed.’

The Issues Brief, ‘[Harnessing data to improve patient care and prevent hospital-acquired complications](#)’, is co-authored by 2024 Deeble Scholar Dr Josephine Lovegrove, a Senior Research Fellow at Griffith University, and highlights several key policy recommendations.

‘These recommendations target standardisation or reporting requirements, improving timeliness and streamlining publication by using fewer platforms, legislative reforms and developing co-designed approaches to publication with consumers.’

The Brief ‘[Harnessing data to improve patient care and prevent hospital-acquired complications](#)’ and an online version of this [media release](#) can be found on the AHHA website.

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