Project Title: Patients' Perceptions of Healthcare-Acquired Infections in Rural Australia	**Code: SRH2**

Host School / Institute: School of Rural Health (Dubbo/Orange) | **Address:** Audley Clinic, Cnr Acacia Way and Canobolas Drive Bloomfield Campus, Orange, NSW

Certificates & Clearances required: Yes   *Vaccination Certificate   *Police clearance

Information on how to obtain certificates, where necessary, will be given to successful applicants.

Primary Supervisor: A/Prof Catherine Hawke

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Co-Supervisor/team: The summer scholar will be working under direct guidance of the primary supervisor A/Prof Catherine Hawke (Deputy Head of School, Rural Clinical School, Dubbo and Orange) and a co-supervisor (Prof Ramon Shaban, Clinical Chair of Infection Prevention and Disease Control). The research team is a multidisciplinary team of nurses, doctors and public health professionals with proven expertise in infection prevention and control, rural health, surveillance, and applied qualitative and quantitative research.

Project Type: Design; Qualitative Analysis; Data Analysis

Project Category: Immunology & Infection; Public Health

Skills / Attributes of a successful student: 1. Available logistics and resources to coordinate for activities conducted within the project off and on-field.
2. Data collecting skills reflected in student's ability to conduct a survey and manage data using MS Excel and SPSS).
3. Effective and efficient record management skills to facilitate the project team's activities and ensure data integrity, confidentiality and the safe storage of all types of records and files.
4. General understanding of the processes for preparing reports and evaluations
5. General organisation and teamwork skills

Project Keywords: health-care associated infections; Rural; Health literacy; Hand hygiene; prevention

Project Description: Healthcare-associated infections (HAI) are infections acquired as a direct or indirect result of health care. They are largely preventable, yet the high incidence of HAIs, and its associated mortality rates and economic burden is a major public health concern. There are limited educational resources within Australia designed to prevent HAIs that are sensitive to needs of intended audiences.
Blood stream infections (BSIs) are a key focus area in terms of preventing and minimising HAIs and they are one of the hospital key performance indicators for safety and quality. There are a number of specific ways that patients can be actively involved in monitoring for BSIs. For example, BSIs are often associated with implantable devices, typically needles placed inside the blood vessels of patients, arguably represent the greatest risk of infection. Empowering patients to alert clinicians to the early signs of infection as well as the ongoing need for these to prevent infection are underutilised.
With a focus on BSIs this study will design and test the effectiveness of educational resources to increase patient, family and consumer awareness on how to prevent the spread of infections in rural and regional hospitals. It will involve consumers in the co-design and development of engaging educational resources to enhance their knowledge, perception and attitudes regarding HAIs.
Key objectives are to work with consumers to:
1. Design and develop patient-empowering measures to reduce the risks of BSI to patients that are sensitive to the needs of rural patients, particularly those in settings where access to healthcare is often limited.
2. Conduct an evaluation of the measures and resources in the wider community.
A participatory action research approach will be used to achieve the study objectives. Focus group discussions will be held with patients and community members to review existing resources, develop and test messages to be used in educational materials and determine the best methods for disseminating the resources.