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For Immediate Release

## **Research shows reducing urine testing leads to lower use of antibiotics**

Reducing the number of urine tests on hospital patients has resulted in a drop in antibiotics being prescribed - minimising patient harm and cutting expenditure.

Average monthly urine test requests for inpatients fell 28 percent from 432 to 312 per month following a campaign introduced in Hutt Valley DHB in September 2016.

This has brought estimated annual savings of \$41,760 for the DHB.

“Antibiotics are used for treating the symptoms and preventing complications in urinary tract infections, for example. They are not recommended for patients who have bacteria in their urine, but no symptoms,” said Dr Sisira Jayathissa, Chief Medical Officer at Hutt Valley DHB.

“Giving antibiotics to patients with bacteria in their urine - without symptoms - may not benefit the patient. It could in fact lead to an adverse drug reaction, antibiotic related infection and a higher level of antibiotic resistance.

“Antibiotics save lives but we must use them responsibly and wisely,” he said.

Dr Jayathissa says these kinds of campaigns are part of Hutt Valley DHB’s [Choosing Wisely](#) programme.

“We are seeing results which are showing ways we can improve patient care and outcomes by using less testing and prescribing less antibiotics. This is a cost saving for the health system and benefits patients.”

[The research, recently published in the New Zealand Medical Journal](#), analysed this Hutt Hospital campaign.

Staff were educated on treatment guidelines for patients with urinary tract infections. Rationalising urinary testing by removing urine dipsticks from some clinical areas saw significant reductions in the number of urine culture requests. This led to a drop in the overuse of antibiotics, without increasing incidences of documented urinary tract infections.

Researchers from the University of Otago, Wellington partnered with the Hutt Valley District Health Board on this campaign. The Council of Medical College under its Choosing Wisely programme sponsored the analytics of the research.

### **About Choosing Wisely**

At Hutt Hospital our [Choosing Wisely](#) programme is promoted as “doing the right thing for the patient”. Since 2016 staff from all backgrounds have been involved in Choosing Wisely programmes. Dr Jayathissa strongly links Choosing Wisely to DHB values. “Projects such as this one will lead to wider interest among hospital staff. I feel Choosing Wisely will become a powerful social movement within Hutt Valley DHB” he said.

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