Getting the most from routinely collected data

Issue 4 of *Public Health Research & Practice* is out now, with a focus on Big Data and how it can be harnessed to improve health service delivery and population health.

*Public Health Research & Practice* is Australia’s first online-only open access peer-reviewed public health journal and was launched by The Sax Institute in late 2014 with a strong focus on the connection between research, policy and practice.

Guest editor for Issue 4 is Associate Professor Sarah Thackway, from the NSW Ministry of Health and the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales. In this issue we take a broad look at the burgeoning availability and analysis of routinely collected data, and how best to use it to inform and improve public health policy and practice, and the health of our communities. Our themed articles cover a wide range of topics, including better use of data to drive policy change and efficiency, the need to ensure public trust in health data dissemination, the potential of using geographic information systems (GIS) in research, and some examples of analysis of routinely collected data in practice.

Also in this issue, Halim et al examine the first NSW case of Hendra virus infection in a pet dog, which resulted in the state’s authorities introducing strict quarantine measures for all companion animals during outbreaks.

*Public Health Research & Practice* represents a new direction for the *NSW Public Health Bulletin*, which was published for nearly a quarter of a century by the NSW Ministry of Health.

The Sax Institute hopes the journal’s focus on innovations, data and perspectives from policy and practice will support policy makers, program agencies and practitioners in making decisions that are informed by evidence.

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