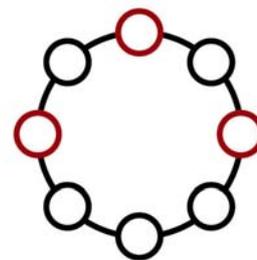


# NCIS News

Edition 20 - April 2018



**NCIS**

*NATIONAL CORONIAL INFORMATION SYSTEM*

## WELCOME

In this edition of NCIS News, we are pleased to provide an update on the scheduled release of the revised pharmaceutical code-set, look at new methods for delivering coder training and welcome new and returning staff members.

As always, we love hearing from our users and welcome any feedback. If you would like to comment on any of the items in this newsletter or would like further information, please contact us at [ncis@ncis.org.au](mailto:ncis@ncis.org.au).

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The NCIS is governed by a Board of Management. Administrative support is provided by the Victorian Department of Justice & Regulation (DJR). The NCIS is funded by each State/Territory Justice Department in Australia and New Zealand, and the Australian Departments of Health, SafeWork Australia, the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission, the Australian Department of Infrastructure & Regional Development and the Australian Institute of Criminology.



## PHARMACEUTICAL CODE-SET: REVISED VERSION

Over the past two years, the NCIS team have been working on revising the way substance-related deaths are coded on the NCIS. The aim is to better align the codeset with the terminology used in toxicology reports and coronial findings in order to streamline the data acquisition and provision process at all stages; coding, quality review, and searching of substance-related deaths within the database.

The revision will result in the:

- Enrichment of the NCIS interface to streamline coding of substances contributing to a death
- Changes in the way substances are displayed within the case screen and searched on within the interface
- Revision of the 'Pharmaceutical Substance for Human Use' codeset, to ensure greater comprehension of the included substances

We are pleased to announce the project is nearing its final stages. The NCIS IT team is currently working on the functional aspects of implementing these enhancements into the NCIS interface and court management systems maintained by the NCIS. The NCIS Quality team is also working on the practicalities of the project, such as mapping existing coding, updating the NCIS Data Dictionary and Coding Manual, and developing comprehensive training material for all NCIS users.

We are pleased to report that the implementation of the revised pharmaceutical codeset and enhanced NCIS interface is on schedule for release in early July 2018. Further detail about the revision will be provided to coders closer to the release date.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRESS UPDATE

The Quality Team continues to make significant progress towards eliminating the backlog of cases awaiting quality review. In the 2017-18 financial year, the Quality Team reviewed 18 months of data and has reduced the backlog of cases awaiting review to within a five month period.

The number of cases quality assured in this period exceeded 25,000 cases, a 34 per cent increase on the previous financial year. The number of cases awaiting quality review has decreased from 19,521 in July 2017 to 8,930 in April 2018, a 46 per cent reduction of the backlog.

An increase in the number of quality assured cases affords greater confidence amongst all NCIS users that the data meets quality standards.

This reduction in the backlog of cases for review has facilitated the provision of more timely feedback to jurisdictions regarding coding. Quality Reports are currently being distributed within three months of case closure in the local court system.

The Quality Team continues to welcome feedback from all NCIS coders and users as we strive to provide optimum service and data for all users.



## NCIS CODER TRAINING

Related to our Quality Assurance program is our commitment to providing support to coders for the invaluable work they do. The NCIS would not exist without the efforts of the court staff who code cases and make it possible for death investigators and researchers to use the NCIS.

Traditionally, we have provided face to face training for coders. While this is an effective method for training, it is costly and time consuming and therefore is used irregularly. In 2016, the NCIS first trialed video conferencing for the delivery of NCIS Search training for new users. This has been very successful and we are now seeking to develop this method of delivery for Coder training as well. It will mean we can respond much more quickly to requests for training and deliver training on a more regular basis, such as a monthly hour long session on a defined topic.

In addition, we are also looking at developing training videos which will be short guides about specific aspects of coding and made available so that coders can access them on demand as required.

Both of these initiatives are in their infancy and are not intended to replace face-to-face training. These methods will be additional ways to ensure all coders have resources on hand, irrespective of location and time-zone or preferred method of learning.

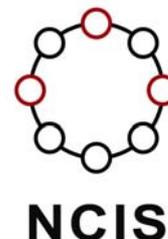
Updates on progress shall be provided through the newsletter and we welcome any feedback.

## STAFF MOVEMENTS

In early January, the NCIS welcomed a new Junior Quality Assurance Officer, Brigid Macpherson, to assist with the final stages of the Quality Assurance Backlog Eradication Project. Brigid completed an internship with the NCIS in mid-2017 as a part of her Health Information Management course at Latrobe University. This was a short contract from January to April and Brigid was able to make a significant contribution to the project before leaving to take up a permanent position as a clinical coder at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. We thank her for her contribution and wish her well in her new role.

The NCIS advertised a new position, Engagement Manager, earlier this year. The position has modified from the previous role, Research and Engagement Manager, to reflect the current business goals of the NCIS. Following a competitive recruitment process, Lauren Dunstan was successful in securing the position. Lauren has a background in Information Management and for the past ten years has worked in various roles at Swinburne University Library, most recently with online content and digital asset management. Lauren comes with a wealth of experience about data collection and software management systems. We look forward to Lauren starting in late May.

This month, the NCIS will also welcome back Jessica Jackson to the role of Deputy Manager. Jessica returns after 12 months maternity leave following the birth of her second daughter, Eva.



## RESEARCH DATA REPORTS

The NCIS Research Report service has experienced a productive start to 2018. Thus far this year, the NCIS has prepared eleven data reports for external organisations, and five coronial reports.

Building regulation and compliance have been particular areas of interest across recent NCIS data reports, including reports on fatalities associated with issues around swimming pool safety, fires in commercial and domestic buildings, and unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning. Recent coronial report topics have demonstrated a continued concern with drowning and other water-related fatalities across Australia and New Zealand. Some examples of these reports include those concerning rock fishing fatalities, swimming pool drownings amongst adults, jet ski-related and flood-related deaths.

Reports on assault and intentional self-harm deaths have also been sought after by those seeking evidence based reports. A report regarding intentional self-harm deaths among persons under 18 in Australia was recently provided by the NCIS to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). This data will be valuable to the AHRC in providing information regarding self-harm deaths of young people in a statutory report to Parliament, as well as in the AHRC's report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

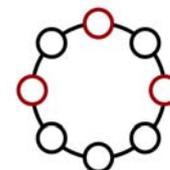
## THIRD PARTY ACCESS APPLICATIONS

Since December 2017, there have been six new third party applications to the NCIS. These applications have been received from three different types of organisations including Academic Institutions, Research Centres, and Health Agencies.

The applications span a range of subject areas including Physical Health, Transport & Traffic Related, Drugs & Alcohol, Work Related, Geographic and Intentional Self-Harm.

The next NCIS closing date for new and renewing applications is Wednesday 13th June. All applications received by this date will be considered at the Justice Human Research Ethics Committee (JHREC) meeting on Thursday 2nd August.

Applicants are reminded that if their application is requesting access to Victorian data that this must be submitted to the Coroners Court of Victoria Research Committee (CCOV RC) for consideration before it can be submitted to the JHREC. The next closing date for CCOV RC submissions is Wednesday 9th May.



### NCIS STATISTICS

#### Case closure and Document Attachment Rates for all Australian jurisdictions and New Zealand cases 2000-2017

NCIS case closure rates by jurisdiction at 1 March 2018

Jurisdiction	% Cases Closed
ACT	96%
NSW	89%
NT	96%
QLD	92%
SA	95%
TAS	93%
VIC	85%
WA	93%
NZ*	88%

\* The NCIS contains only closed cases from New Zealand, however this figure for NZ indicates the proportion of closed cases on the NCIS as a function of all NZ Coronial cases (open and closed), as indicated by the NZ Coronial Services Centre.

NCIS case document attachment by jurisdiction at 1 March 2018

Jurisdiction	Autopsy	Finding	Toxicology	Police
ACT	93%	98%	75%	98%
NSW	75%	62%	66%	55%
NT	94%	97%	74%	97%
QLD	67%	65%	41%	97%
SA	0%	99%	26%	100%
TAS	83%	90%	90%	98%
VIC	94%	92%	97%	89%
WA	78%	98%	91%	100%
NZ	98%	98%	80%	97%

Further detail related to the above statistics are available at:  
<http://www.ncis.org.au/data-collection-2/operational-statistics/>

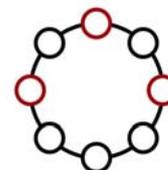
## NCIS DATA REFERENCES

Recent publications that have referenced data from the NCIS include:

- Brukner, P. & Gara, T. (2017). "Cricket-related fatalities in Australia". *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 20 (40-41). Doi: 10.1016/j.jsams.2017.09.274
- Chan, B. S. H., Chiew, A. L., Grainger, S., Page, C. B., Gaul, A., Mostafa, A., Roberts, M. S., Buckley, N. A. & Isbister, G. K. (2018). "Bromoxynil and 2-methyl-4-chlorophenoxyacetic acid (MCPA) poisoning could be a bad combination". *Clinical Toxicology*. Doi: 10.1080/15563650.2018.1433299
- Chang, S. S. M., Symons, R. C. A. & Ozanne-Smith, J. (2017). "Child Road Traffic Injury Mortality in Victoria, Australia (0-14 years), the need for targeted action". *Injury*. Doi: 10.1016/j.injury.2017.12.018
- Mullins, R. J., Wainstein, B. K., Barnes, E. H. & Campbell, D. E. (2018). "Angioedema in Australia: hospital admission rates and fatalities, 2000 - 2013". *The Medical Journal of Australia*. Doi: 10.5694/mja17.00404
- Olds, K., Rodriguez, M. & Langlois, N. (2018). "The Australian National Coronial Information System: Limited by Quality of Data". *Academic Forensic Pathology*, 8 (180-181). Doi: 10.23907/2018.013
- Saar, E., Bugeja, L. & Ranson, D. L. (2017). "National Coronial Information System: Epidemiology and the Coroner in Australia". *Academic Forensic Pathology: The Official Publication of the National Association of Medical Examiners*. Doi: 10.23907/2017.049

Recent media articles in print, radio and online that have referenced the NCIS include:

- Carroll, P. (2018). "Codeine plan will force many to suffer unnecessary pain". <<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/codeine-plan-will-force-many-to-suffer-unnecessary-pain/news-story/f65b2d74d3a6ce715a2d7db9b69cfd95>> (Retrieved 4 January 2018)
- Duck, J. (2018). "Stock agent tragically dies after being trampled by cow on cattle farm". <<http://www.mygc.com.au/stock-agent-tragically-dies-trampled-cow-cattle-farm/>> (Retrieved 8 January 2018)
- Edevance, G. (2018). "Venomous brown snake found hiding in child's lunch box". <<http://www.newsweek.com/venomous-brown-snake-childs-lunchbox-australia-822060>> (Retrieved 1 March 2018)
- Haggan, M. (2018). "OTC codeine death claims 'must stop'". <<https://ajp.com.au/news/otc-codeine-death-claims-must-stop/>> (Retrieved 24 January 2018)
- SBS. (2018). "174 people killed playing cricket: study". <<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/174-people-killed-playing-cricket-study>> (Retrieved 26 March 2018)
- Steger, S. (2018). "Revealed: Mum's death not black and white, Coroners Court hears". <<https://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/news/revealed-mums-death-not-black-or-white-coroners-co/3361104/>> (Retrieved 16 March 2018)
- Unknown author. (2018). "Three wrong statements on codeine". <<https://ajp.com.au/columns/opinion/three-wrong-statements-codeine/>> (Retrieved 24 January 2018)



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## FEEDBACK

The NCIS welcomes any comments, suggestions or queries about the content of this newsletter or the NCIS generally.

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