

Media release

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First national infection prevention and control guidelines for acupuncture practice

The Chinese Medicine Board of Australia (the National Board) has issued its [Infection prevention and control guidelines for acupuncture practice](#), which apply nationally to all registered Chinese medicine practitioners in the division of acupuncture.

The primary role of the National Board is to protect the public and set the standards and policies that health practitioners must meet in order to become and remain registered.

The guidelines complement the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) *Australian guidelines for the prevention and control of infection in healthcare*¹ (NHMRC Guidelines), which have been adopted by the National Board.

The National Board's guidelines set requirements for acupuncture practice on infection prevention and control, and:

- draw attention to those parts of the NHMRC Guidelines that are most relevant to acupuncture practice
- clarify areas that are specific to acupuncture practice and not addressed in the NHMRC Guidelines, and
- provide detail when additional measures are needed to prevent and control the risk of infection.

This is the first Australia wide guidelines specifically relating to acupuncture practice. The guidelines include important statements concerning:

- reprocessing of reusable instruments and equipment
- hand hygiene and alcohol-based hand rub
- the appropriate use of gloves
- the disposal of clinical waste
- routine skin preparation prior to skin penetration in acupuncture practice
- post-treatment considerations
- non-sharp waste disposal, and
- the prevention and management of sharps injuries.

Of particular importance for infection prevention are new requirements for reprocessing cups, with bamboo cups classified as single use items which must be disposed of after use.

The National Board guidelines apply to registered Chinese medicine practitioners in the division of acupuncture. Health practitioners from other regulated health professions, who are endorsed to practice acupuncture may find the guidelines a useful reference for acupuncture practice.

¹ NHMRC 2010, Australian Government, Canberra (available from www.nhmrc.gov.au/node/30290)

All registered Chinese medicine practitioners in the division of acupuncture must comply with:

- the NHMRC Guidelines
- the National Board guidelines, and
- relevant state, territory and local government requirements that apply to their place of business.

Under the National Law, the title *acupuncturist* can only be used by:

- persons registered with the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia, or
- persons whose registration is endorsed by a health practitioner board as being qualified to practise as an acupuncturist.

The Board has published an [explanatory statement](#) and [FAQs](#) to assist practitioners understand their obligations under the policy.

The Chair of the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia, Professor Charlie Xue, said the guidelines marked an important milestone in the national regulation of the Chinese medicine profession as an important mechanism to promote safe acupuncture practice.

‘The focus of the Board is to protect the public. These guidelines provide the clear, national benchmark for infection prevention and control for acupuncture practice and are an important public safety initiative,’ Prof Xue said.

For more information

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