

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **NUS Dentistry-led study finds gaps in dental antibiotic prescribing despite high awareness of antimicrobial resistance**

*Singapore, 20 July 2026* \_ A new [study](#) led by the National University of Singapore (NUS) Faculty of Dentistry has found that many dentists continue to prescribe antibiotics inappropriately despite recognising the dangers posed by antimicrobial resistance (AMR), one of the world's most pressing public health challenges. The study was published in the international top-tiered academic journal, *International Dental Journal*, which is the official scientific journal of the FDI World Dental Federation, one of the world's oldest existing health profession organisations serving as the principal representative body for more than one million dentists worldwide.

The study's researchers surveyed 280 dentists across Singapore to assess their antibiotic prescribing practices, knowledge, and attitudes. Their findings reveal substantial variation in prescribing decisions, with appropriate prescribing rates ranging from just 6.5 per cent to 97.7 per cent depending on the clinical scenario.

Particularly concerning were periodontal and oral surgery cases, where appropriate prescribing rates were among the lowest. The study also found that when dentists faced non-clinical pressures, such as patient requests for antibiotics or uncertainty over a diagnosis, appropriate prescribing rates fell to between 21.1 per cent and 37.5 per cent. This highlights a need for greater public awareness on the importance of appropriate antibiotic prescription.

The findings are significant because dental antibiotic prescribing accounts for approximately 10 per cent of all antibiotic prescriptions across human healthcare globally. Previous research suggests that up to 80 per cent of these prescriptions may be unnecessary or inappropriate, contributing to the rise of drug-resistant infections.

While most dentists surveyed understood the importance of responsible antibiotic use and acknowledged AMR as a serious threat, the study identified persistent knowledge gaps and inconsistencies in prescribing practices. Nonetheless, the nation's dental community was instrumental in volunteering time to participate in this research with the aim of improving healthcare standards for our local population.

The research points to a need for stronger antibiotic stewardship within dentistry, including greater awareness of recently published local prescribing guidelines, targeted professional training, and digital decision-support resources to help clinicians make evidence-based prescribing decisions.

As Singapore continues efforts to combat AMR under its national action plans, the study highlights an often-overlooked area of healthcare where improvements could help safeguard the effectiveness of antibiotics for future generations.

NUS Dentistry Assistant Professor Charlene Goh, one of the study's researchers and Director of the Discipline of Primary Dental Care & Population Oral Health, said, "Most dentists prescribe antibiotics because they want to protect their patients, particularly when there is concern about infection, swelling, or the possibility of systemic spread. But antimicrobial resistance means we have to be more careful and evidence-based when antibiotics are used. Patients play an important role by understanding that antibiotics are not always needed, and that avoiding unnecessary antibiotics helps preserve their effectiveness for when they are truly required."

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### **About National University of Singapore (NUS)**

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education, research, and entrepreneurship, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise. We have 15 colleges, faculties, and schools across three campuses in Singapore, with more than 40,000 students from 100 countries enriching our vibrant and diverse campus community. We have also established more than 20 NUS Overseas Colleges entrepreneurial hubs around the world.

Our multidisciplinary and real-world approach to education, research, and entrepreneurship enables us to work closely with industry, governments, and academia to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in our faculties, research centres of excellence, corporate labs, and more than 30 university-level research institutes focus on themes that include energy; environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems; Asian studies; and Smart Nation capabilities such as artificial intelligence, data science, operations research, and cybersecurity.

For more information on NUS, please visit [nus.edu.sg](https://nus.edu.sg).

### **About NUS Faculty of Dentistry**

The NUS Faculty of Dentistry began as the Department of Dentistry within the King Edward VII College of Medicine in 1929. It was the first dental school to be established in a British colony in the East. It achieved full Faculty status in 1966 and continues to be the only dental school in Singapore.

The Faculty is led by a Dean and a team of academic and administrative staff, in fulfilling its strive for excellence in the areas of oral health clinical care, research, and education. It works closely with departments in the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and other

teaching hospitals and institutions across Singapore in healthcare delivery and education. It also partners departments in other faculties of NUS, public institutions, and private enterprises in multi-disciplinary research activities.

For more information on the Faculty, please visit [dentistry.nus.edu.sg](https://dentistry.nus.edu.sg).