

# Investigators examine antibiotic prescribing following COVID-19 restrictions

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In regions with high rates of COVID-19 spread, such as Europe and the United States, prescriptions for antibiotics in the community dropped dramatically after COVID-19 restrictions were introduced in early 2020. A study published in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* looked at antibiotic prescribing in Australia, which has had low COVID-19

rates.

Analyses of national claims data revealed that COVID-19 restrictions in Australia were associated with substantial reductions in community dispensing of antibiotics primarily used to treat respiratory infections, but antibiotics for non-respiratory infections were unchanged.

"The issue is that antibiotics should rarely be prescribed for common viral respiratory infections in the first place. These big reductions show how low general practitioners' antibiotic prescribing could go if guidelines were followed more closely," said co-senior Helga Zoega, Ph.D., of UNSW Sydney, in Australia.

**More information:** Malcolm B. Gillies et al, Changes in antibiotic prescribing following COVID-19 restrictions: Lessons for post-pandemic antibiotic stewardship, *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* (2021). [DOI: 10.1111/bcp.15000](https://doi.org/10.1111/bcp.15000)

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