CALL TO ACTION

Combat Antimicrobial Resistance and Preserve Antimicrobials for Future Generations

May 2016

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THE NEED TO ACT NOW

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has the potential to jeopardize progress against many current global health threats and to cause a resurgence of diseases that are currently easily treated with antibacterials, antivirals, or other antimicrobials. AMR could also severely hinder many of today's medical advances, such as cancer chemotherapy and organ transplantation, which often require the use of effective antimicrobials. AMR reduces the effectiveness of treatment, which means that patients remain ill and infectious for longer periods of time, thereby increasing the chances of further spreading antimicrobial-resistant strains. Because resistant strains take longer to treat and often require more expensive secondary therapies, AMR increases overall health care costs and strains health systems.[1] Already, approximately 700,000 deaths globally can be attributed to AMR each year. But that number could jump to 10 million by 2050, if widespread and coordinated action is not taken.[2]

Globally, more than 50% of medicines are prescribed, dispensed, or sold inappropriately.[3] Overuse and misuse of antimicrobials is a worldwide problem and results from complex and interacting deficiencies across health systems, including lack of legislation and regulation, inefficient supply chain management, few or no quality assurance mechanisms, inappropriate prescribing and dispensing practices, and lack of adherence and other patient behaviors. The overuse and misuse of antimicrobials is a major driver of AMR.[4]

AMR is a known threat in every region, in every country in the world, regardless of income level. It is critical that every country proactively take steps against AMR, as containment will likely only occur with concerted, coordinated global action.

OUR CALL TO ACTION

The Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network (EPN), a faith-based organization, includes over 100 members from over 30 countries across 5 continents. EPN supports churches and church health systems in providing and promoting just, compassionate, and quality pharmaceutical services; and believes that access to safe and effective medicines of assured quality is a human right. As the work of expanding equitable access to medicines and pharmaceutical services continues, we believe it is also imperative to protect the continued efficacy of such medicines.

Our 2016 biannual forum, held May 19–21 in Tubingen, Germany, further intensified our focus on AMR and infectious diseases and brought together stakeholders to exchange ideas, share knowledge and best practices, and chart an effective course of action to address the global challenge of AMR.

In this context, we, the participants of EPN's Forum 2016 renew our call for immediate and swift action from our network and other stakeholders to mitigate the threat that AMR poses to every country and every person. The four recommended actions, listed in the the pages that follow, build upon our 2011 call for action and also draw on the World Health Organization's 2015 Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance.

We know that without coordinated action from a multitude of stakeholders, progress against AMR will fall short. For that reason, we recommend targeted areas of action for key groups:

- Governments and policymakers
- Health care institutions (both public and private)
- Health schools, training institutions, and professional associations
- Health care providers, including community health workers
- Patient advocacy groups, civil society organizations, consumers, and the general public

STRENGTHENING OUR RESOLVE

Moving forward with a renewed emphasis on collaboration and coordination, the participants of this Forum resolve to promote, advocate, and implement these actions against AMR in alignment with WHO's Global Action Plan on AMR and EPN's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan,[5] specifically Strategic Priority Area 6 (Antimicrobial Resistance and Infectious Diseases). EPN and its members remain deeply committed to building awareness and catalyzing momentum in the fight against AMR so that the use of antimicrobials can be preserved for future generations.

1 http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs194/en/
2 amr-review.org/file/111
3 World Health Organization. 2010. Medicines: Rational Use of Medicines, Fact Sheet N°338.
4 Littmann J. 2015. The Ethical Significance of Antimicrobial Resistance. *Public Health Ethics*, 8 (3): 209-224.
5 Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network Strategic Plan, 2016-2020.

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	GOVERNMENT AND POLICY MAKERS	HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS	HEALTH SCHOOLS, TRAINING INSTITUTIONS, AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS	PATIENT ADVOCACY GROUPS, CONSUMERS, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC
ACTION 1 BUILD ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, AND POLITICAL WILL TO COMBAT AMR	Help promote public awareness and understanding of infection prevention and responsible use of antimicrobial medicines across all sectors Devote appropriate resources to strengthen systems that help mitigate AMR, including surveillance, regulatory, registration, and quality assurance functions	Promote and increase awareness of the importance of rational prescribing and dispensing practices among both public and private sector health- facility staff	Include antimicrobial use and resistance topics in school curricula to promote better understanding and awareness Provide the media with accurate and relevant information so that public information and reporting reinforce key messages	Counsel patients on correct use of medicines prescribed and dispensed Educate patients on importance of adhering to prescribed regimens, dangers of self-medication, and potential for development of AMR Stay abreast of new AMR-related developments in relevant professional or health areas or specialties	Consumers/public: Ask for information from your health care provider about the risks of non-adherence and self-medication, and always follow instructions given by health care providers Advocacy groups: Integrate AMR into action plans and strategies Advocacy groups: Engage the media on AMR topics
ACTION 2 STRENGTHEN CAPACITY OF HEALTH SYSTEMS TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS AMR	Create or strengthen effective and enforceable licensing, distribution, use, and quality assurance mechanisms in human and animal health, including a regulatory framework for preservation of new antimicrobials Develop national infection prevention and control policies and create enabling environments for their implementation Develop, update, or revise national standard treatment guidelines (STGs) and essential medicines lists, with focused attention to the sections that include antimicrobials, to support rational use	Ensure that mechanisms to implement and promote antimicrobial stewardship, such as Drug and Therapeutic Committees, exist to ensure the correct selection and use of medicines at the right dose, route, and duration based on best evidence available Establish/strengthen systems to improve facility-level infection prevention and control practices Develop and implement facility-specific STGs, in alignment with national and global guidelines Develop, distribute, and train staff on infection control and waste management guidelines	Ensure mandatory training and education on AMR and infection prevention measures for all health professionals Include training on AMR as a requirement in professional development, accreditation, and registration Ensure training programs utilize most recent standard guidelines	Treat patients and prescribe, dispense, and administer medicines in line with national guidelines and based on essential medicines lists Adhere to recommended infection prevention and control policies and practices Practice proper hygiene and implement appropriate infection control measures Use behavior change communication strategies with patients and their caregivers to encourage correct behaviors regarding antimicrobial use and infection prevention	Consumers/general public: Follow basic infection control practices, such as regular handwashing, to prevent disease Consumers/general public: Stay up-to-date on vaccines and practice other prevention measures to avoid contracting a drug-resistant infection Advocacy groups: Ensure that efforts to expand access to medicines are accompanied by efforts to mitigate AMR Advocacy groups: Advocate for patient-centered approaches to help facilitate rational medicine use

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ACTION 3 ENSURE EFFECTIVE COORDINATION BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS	Promote, establish, and support multi-sectoral coalitions, including the veterinary and agriculture sectors, to address AMR at local and national levels and foster engagement at regional and global levels	Develop networks and collaborations with practitioners, other facilities, and partners to encourage information sharing and support technical assistance for containing AMR	Establish AMR as a core component of education, training, examination, professional registration or certification, and professional development	Connect to relevant coordination mechanisms at facilities and stay abreast of current developments	Consumers/general public: Talk to your health care provider about the potential for drug resistance and ask how you can reduce your risk Advocacy groups: Engage and convene stakeholder groups regularly to stay abreast of new AMR developments and join coalitions against AMR
ACTION 4 STRENGTHEN MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS FOR AMR	Develop national capacity to collect and analyze data on the prevalence of AMR and antimicrobial use, and disseminate data to appropriate national and international bodies Strengthen national regulatory authorities to ensure that quality control laboratories are operational, functional, and efficient in responding to AMR	Ensure that monitoring and surveillance data are collected and analyzed through a coordinating body, such as a Drug and Therapeutics Committee, and submitted to appropriate national bodies Ensure that facilities have laboratory capacity to monitor AMR and encourage the use of resistance data for decision making	Ensure that training curricula and materials include appropriate information on a professional's responsibility to monitor and support surveillance of AMR and antimicrobial use	Follow local and national AMR monitoring and reporting guidelines as applicable	Consumers/general public: When taking antimicrobials, report adverse drug events to your health care provider Advocacy groups: Advocate for the collection and dissemination of information on AMR and public availability of relevant antimicrobial use and AMR data

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