WHO has published its first ever list of antibiotic-resistant “priority pathogens”—a catalogue of 12 families of bacteria that urgently need research and development of new antibiotics.

The list highlights in particular the threat of gram-negative bacteria that are resistant to multiple antibiotics. These bacteria have built-in abilities to find new ways to resist treatment and can pass along genetic material that allows other bacteria to become drug-resistant as well.

“This list is a new tool to ensure R&D responds to urgent public health needs,” says Dr Marie-Paule Kieny, WHO’s Assistant Director-General for Health Systems and Innovation.

“Antibiotic resistance is growing, and we are fast running out of treatment options. If we leave it to market forces alone, the new antibiotics we most urgently need are not going to be developed in time.”

The WHO list is divided into three categories according to the urgency of need for new antibiotics: critical, high and medium priority.

Germany pledges new funds

The Federal Ministry of Health of Germany has made 25 million euros available to WHO. These funds are to support the “...priorities of AMR, WHO reform, health systems strengthening and financial support for Emergency Reform”.

Call for consultants

The AMR Secretariat is seeking consultants for the following: (i) to coordinate and serve as the focal point within the Secretariat for the 2017 global antibiotic awareness campaign “Antibiotics: Handle with Care”; and (ii) to assist in the implementation of the Global Action Plan on AMR on issues related to national action plan development and surveillance. It is also seeking proposals with regards to making the case for AMR as a development issue, with a view to securing sustained funding for the implementation of national action plans on AMR. More information here.

G20 health experts met 28 Feb -2 March in Berlin. Mr Hermann Gröhe, Federal Minister of Health, Germany says “We need effective antibiotics for our health systems. We have to take joint action today for a healthier tomorrow. Therefore, we will discuss and bring the attention of the G20 to the fight against antimicrobial resistance. WHO’s first global priority pathogen list is an important new tool to secure and guide research and development related to new antibiotics.” WHO also recommend the critical need for R&D of new antibiotics to tackle drug-resistant tuberculosis.

While more R&D is vital, alone, it cannot solve the problem. To address resistance, there must also be better prevention of infections and appropriate use of existing antibiotics in humans and animals, as well as rational use of any new antibiotics that are developed in future.
Quality Assurance and Rational Use of Medicines in Pacific Island Countries

Although Pacific Island Countries have achieved substantial progress in addressing AMR, challenges remain, not least the establishment of a sustainable supply chain. A sub-regional meeting of Heads of Pharmacy Departments in the Pacific, 14-17 February, was the first meeting of its kind to discuss cross-cutting issues around quality assurance and rational use of medical products. Day 3 of the meeting focused on AMR and vaccines. Twenty-three participants from 13 countries participated in the 4-day meeting held in Nadi, Fiji.

The main challenges identified by participants were: irrational prescribing and use of antimicrobials; lack of quality data to support evidence-based interventions; poor infection control in healthcare facilities; limited financial and human resources; and, limited information on the importation of animal products and animal feed. The meeting closed with recommendations for action by both Member States and WHO related to raising awareness, generating quality data on AMR and antimicrobial consumption, and for support to finalizing national action plans.

Discovery Awards - open seed fund

The Longitude Prize is a five-year challenge with a £10 million prize fund that will reward the development of a transformative, accurate, affordable, rapid, point-of-care diagnostic test that is easy to use anywhere in the world and can guide infection treatment. The Longitude Prize currently has an open seed fund, the Discovery Awards, to provide small grants of up to £25,000 to help individuals or teams further develop their ideas to win the Prize, and to broaden the range of innovators competing in terms of disciplines, sectors and countries. Any team or individual, anywhere in the world, working on a diagnostic that could meet the Prize criteria can apply for these funds. The only condition is that applicants register as a team on the Longitude Prize website. The fund opened on 23 January 2017 and closes on 21 April 2017.

Winners of EU Health Awards for NGOs

First prize went to BEUC/The European Consumer Organisation which advocates for stronger rules regulating the use of antimicrobials in livestock to ensure they remain effective when needed, in both animal and human medicine.

The Alliance to Save our Antibiotics were awarded 2nd prize. The Alliance campaigns against the overuse of antibiotics in livestock farming, and for a shift to welfare-oriented systems of rearing livestock where the need for antibiotics is greatly reduced.

3rd prize went to the World Alliance against Antibiotic Resistance (WAAAR). Dr Marc Sprenger, Director, WHO AMR Secretariat, paid tribute to WAAAR “for its long-standing commitment to addressing AMR and for publishing the annual AMR Control book”. The 2017 edition of AMR Control is being prepared in time for the G20 meeting of Ministers of Health to be held mid-May in Berlin. To read more, click here.

From Marc Sprenger at the Pakistan NAP workshop

This week, 80 experts from the human, animal and agriculture sectors and from different provinces in Pakistan have gathered to discuss the development of their AMR National Action Plan. Prior to the one-week workshop, the Ministry of Health finalized a situation analysis. I am impressed by the thorough discussions and commitment of all participants. I had the opportunity to visit a public and a private hospital and meet with several experts, which has demonstrated to me again the importance of good health systems. AMR can only be controlled when doctors and pharmacists are well educated and provide antimicrobials on prescription only. Change only happens when there is a sense of urgency and commitment and I have certainly witnessed that commitment this week.
Editor’s picks

Antimicrobial resistance common among paediatric bloodstream infections in India

In a descriptive review of 82 papers published between January 2000 and July 2015, the authors conclude that high rates of resistance to WHO-recommended first-line antibiotics for bloodstream infections in neonates and children in India indicate an urgent need to enhance antibiotic stewardship, and infection prevention and control measures.

Risk-based calculator predicts neonatal sepsis risk; could halve antibiotic use in newborns.

A risk calculator, available online, could significantly reduce the use of empirical antibiotics in cases of early onset sepsis, a serious bacterial infection in newborns. In the study of more than 200,000 newborns, researchers found that use of the online risk calculator led to a significant drop in empirical antibiotic use in newborns’ first 24 hours, from 5% before the calculator was implemented to 2.6%, as well as a drop in blood culture use from 14.5% to 4.9%. The rate of adverse outcomes was unchanged. The results are published in JAMA Pediatrics.

Changing perspectives on the use of antibiotics in agriculture

In this short video, Dr. Sam Kariuki, Chairman of the Global Antibiotic Resistance Partnership (GARP)-Kenya Working Group and Director of the Center for Microbiology Research at the Kenya Medical Research Institute, shares an experience of how his team was able to change perspectives on the use of antibiotics in animals in Kenya.

Chart of the Week

The World Bank Group report “Drug Resistant Infections: A Threat to Our Economic Future” shows that a high-case scenario of AMR could cause low-income countries to lose more than 5% of their GDP and push up to 28 million people, mostly in developing countries, into poverty by 2050.

Capacity review for early implementation of antimicrobial resistance surveillance in Jordan

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health of Jordan, WHO conducted a mission from 22 to 26 January 2017 in Jordan to jointly review available capacities in the country for early implementation of the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (GLASS), and to facilitate development of a roadmap for expansion of GLASS. The mission visited 4 selected sites in Amman, Karak and Irbid and met with the animal health sector and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to review available systems and information. At the end of the mission a consultative workshop was held with concerned parties to discuss the findings and the way forward for Jordan.

Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (GLASS)

Cumulative number of countries enrolled to GLASS

Enrolment update: 42 countries have expressed interest in enrolling in GLASS, of which 31 are fully enrolled.
Resources

- Antimicrobial resistance: A manual for developing national action plans and supporting documents and tools. Click [here](#).
- Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (GLASS) documents and tools.
- For information on infection prevention and control, click [here](#).
- For information on antimicrobial resistance and the food chain, click [here](#).
- For AMR activities at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, click [here](#).
- For AMR activities at the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), click [here](#).
- Information on HIV drug resistance available [here](#).
- Information on anti-malarial drug resistance and containment available [here](#).
- For information on multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), click [here](#).

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 27-Mar 2</td>
<td>Pakistan NAP workshop</td>
<td>Islamabad, Pakistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 28-March 2</td>
<td>G20 Health Working Group meeting</td>
<td>Berlin, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 6-10</td>
<td>Zimbabwe NAP workshop</td>
<td>Harare, Zimbabwe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 7-9</td>
<td>Meeting to support NAPs under “One-Health” approach for Mercosur countries</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 23-24</td>
<td>Expert consultation meeting on health workforce education and AMR control</td>
<td>WHO HQ, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 27-31</td>
<td>21st WHO Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines</td>
<td>WHO HQ, Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 28-Apr 1</td>
<td>WHO/FAO/OIE NAP meeting</td>
<td>Manila, Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 19-20</td>
<td>G20 Health Ministers’ meeting</td>
<td>Berlin, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 26-27</td>
<td>G7 meeting</td>
<td>Taormina, Sicily, Italy</td>
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Please let us know of your upcoming events for inclusion in the newsletter. We welcome your suggestions and comments. For all communications, and if you would like to subscribe to the newsletter, please contact the Secretariat at whoamrsecretariat@who.int. Responsibility for newsletter contents rests with the AMR Secretariat Director: Marc Sprenger. 

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