Antimicrobial Resistance and 20th Century Medicine

Antimicrobial resistance is a complex challenge and a major global problem. We need to understand better how pathogens evolve, how they can be targeted, and how their characteristics can quickly be diagnosed. But it is a social and economic issue as well. It is about how doctors prescribe, and what their patients demand of them. It is about regulation and public policy, how antibiotics old and new are deployed. It concerns animals as well as people. It is about the right incentives for science and industry. It’s a global issue: pathogens, resistant or not, do not respect borders.

Current low level of investment in R&D on antibiotics is a cause for concern, and new models are needed to ensure discovery of new, and improvement of existing medicines, as well as development of other technologies and interventions.

However, although usually perceived as a recent and imminent threat, antimicrobial drug resistance has a 70-year history to be told. The seminar will investigate historical situations in which current challenges relating to antibiotic resistance were shaped.

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