



Antimicrobial resistance

Resolutions of the
**World Health Assembly and
WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia**

USE ANTIBIOTICS RATIONALLY

Antimicrobial resistance

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WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia

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Prevention and containment of antimicrobial resistance

SEA/RC63/R4

The Regional Committee,

Recalling World Health Assembly resolutions (WHA37.33, WHA51.17, WHA54.11 and WHA58.27) on rational use of drugs and prevention of antimicrobial resistance,

Concerned at the emergence and rapid spread of resistance in several microorganisms to the available antimicrobial agents across the South-East Asia Region, the unregulated and unauthorized availability of antimicrobial agents, irrational use of antimicrobials in medical practice and in the community, and the extensive use of antimicrobial agents for non-therapeutic purposes in the veterinary and fishery sectors, thus creating avoidable selection pressure to emergence of resistance,

Noting that antimicrobial resistance is increasingly hampering treatment of infectious diseases as a result either of totally ineffective currently available antimicrobials or of the high cost and toxic effects of newer drugs,

Aware that there is a lack of investment in the development of new antimicrobials, and that the efficacy of existing antimicrobials must therefore be preserved,

Recognizing that antimicrobial resistance in tuberculosis, malaria and human immunodeficiency virus will impede the achievement of health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Noting the impact of resistant organisms in the efficient utilization of modern technological and scientific advances in improving human health through complex surgeries and transplantation procedures,

and the inadequacy of rational prescription and administration of antimicrobial agents,

Further noting the tendency of communities to use antimicrobial agents as a panacea for all illnesses and the poor adherence to the recommended regimen,

Aware of the international implications of the problem of resistant organisms crossing national boundaries through travel, trade and foodchains, and

Recognizing the growing public health importance of antimicrobial resistance and its increasing impact on health systems,

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to encourage the development of coordination mechanisms against antimicrobial resistance and establishment of appropriate governance mechanisms to combat antimicrobial resistance;
- (2) to establish national surveillance systems for monitoring of antimicrobial resistance, use of antimicrobial agents in humans and animals and their impact on human health and economy;
- (3) to effectively enforce the legislation and regulations that counteract the manufacture, sale and distribution of substandard antimicrobial agents and prohibit the unauthorized sale of antimicrobial agents;
- (4) to work with relevant government departments in discouraging the non-therapeutic use of antimicrobial agents in the veterinary and fishery sectors;
- (5) to emphasize educational programmes for health and veterinary students and professionals to comply with the rational use of antimicrobial agents, to improve practices to prevent the spread of resistant pathogens, and to promote appropriate antimicrobial use in health-care facilities, in the community, and in animal feed production;

- (6) to strengthen infection control programmes to control infectious diseases, especially in hospital settings, in order to contain hospital-acquired infections;
- (7) to support operational research on behavioural aspects and interventions to contain the irrational use of antimicrobials, and laboratory and clinical research to understand the technical dimension of antimicrobial resistance;
- (8) to initiate community-awareness campaigns to solicit people's active cooperation in the rational use of antimicrobial agents; and

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (1) to assist in the development of coordination mechanisms to establish and implement sustainable national policies and strategic frameworks for rational antimicrobial use in the health and veterinary sectors;
- (2) to support development of national surveillance networks, especially laboratory capacity, for monitoring antimicrobial resistance and use of antimicrobials;
- (3) to facilitate sharing of knowledge and information between countries and regions, and to document best practices in combating antimicrobial resistance;
- (4) to develop generic technical and educational material that can be adapted by countries in monitoring resistance and educating health professionals and communities;
- (5) to collaborate with nongovernmental organizations that are engaged in containing antimicrobial resistance and bring about a synergy in their actions for the benefit of the Region;
- (6) to support capacity building in research on prevention and containment of antimicrobial resistance; and
- (7) to compile and share evidence with Member States on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals and its impact on the emergence of antimicrobial resistance and on human health.

Progress in the rational use of medicines

WHA60.16

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on rational use of medicines: progress in implementing the WHO medicines strategy;¹

Recalling the report on rational use of medicines by prescribers and patients discussed at the Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly and followed by adoption of resolution WHA58.27 on antimicrobial resistance;

Recalling resolutions WHA39.27, WHA41.16 and WHA47.13 on the rational use of drugs, WHA41.17, WHA45.30 and WHA47.16 on ethical criteria for medicinal drug promotion, WHA43.20 and WHA45.27 on the WHO Action Programme on Essential Drugs, WHA47.12 on the role of the pharmacist, WHA49.14 and WHA52.19 on the revised drug strategy, WHA51.9 on cross-border advertising, promotion and sale of medical products using the Internet, and WHA54.11 on the WHO medicines strategy;

Recognizing the efforts of WHO, in collaboration with governments, universities, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations, in areas related to health-care delivery systems and health-insurance programmes in order to improve the use of medicines by prescribers, dispensers and patients;

Aware of the core components of WHO's strategy for promoting the rational use of medicines;²

¹ Document A60/24.

² Document WHO/EDM/2004.5.

Wishing to promote evidence-based rational use of medicines by providers and consumers and better access to essential medicines;

Aware that irrational use of medicines continues to be an urgent and widespread problem in the public and private health sector in developed and developing countries, with serious consequences in terms of poor patient outcome, adverse drug reactions, increasing antimicrobial resistance and wasted resources;

Acknowledging that successful implementation of previous resolutions on antimicrobial resistance cannot be achieved without addressing the global problem of irrational use of medicines;

Recognizing that many countries do not have a stringent drug-regulatory authority nor a full national programme or body to promote rational use of medicines;

Emphasizing that global initiatives to increase access to essential medicines should adhere to the principle of rational use of medicines, and include adherence by patients;

Concerned that insufficient attention and resources are being directed towards tackling the problem of irrational use of medicines by prescribers, dispensers and consumers;

Emphasizing the need for a comprehensive, sustainable, national and sector-wide approach to promote the rational use of medicines;

Recognizing that financing of medicines and methods of arrangements for provider payments can have a major impact on rational use, and that appropriate policies on financing health care are required;

Recognizing that there may be incentives for the irrational use of medicines throughout the health system, for example, in some circumstances which give rise to conflict of interest;

Concerned that direct-to-consumer or Internet sales may give rise to irrational use of medicines;

Convinced that it is time for governments, the health professions, civil society, the private sector and the international community to pledge their commitment, including adequate resources, to promoting the rational use of medicines,

1. URGES Member States:³

- (1) to invest sufficiently in human resources and provide adequate financing for strengthening institutional capacity in order to ensure more appropriate use of medicines in both the public and private sectors;
- (2) to consider establishing and/or strengthening, as appropriate, a national drug regulatory authority and a full national programme and/or multidisciplinary body, involving civil society and professional bodies, to monitor and promote the rational use of medicine;
- (3) to consider developing, strengthening and implementing, where appropriate, the application of an essential medicines list into the benefit package of the existing or new insurance funds;
- (4) to develop and strengthen existing training programmes on rational use of medicines, to ensure that they are taken into account in the curricula for all health professionals and medical students, including their continuing education, where appropriate, and to promote programmes of public education in rational use of medicines;
- (5) to enact new, or enforce existing, legislation to ban inaccurate, misleading or unethical promotion of medicines, to monitor promotion of medicines, and to develop and implement programmes that will provide independent, nonpromotional information about medicines;
- (6) to develop and implement national policies and programmes for improving use of medicines, including clinical guidelines and essential medicines lists,

³ And regional economic integration organizations, where appropriate.

as appropriate, with an emphasis on multifaceted interventions targeting both the public and private health sectors, and involving providers and consumers;

- (7) to consider developing, and strengthening where appropriate, the capacity of hospital drug and therapeutic committees to promote the rational use of medicines;
- (8) to expand to national level sustainable interventions successfully implemented at local level;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to strengthen the leadership and evidence-based advocacy role of WHO in promoting rational use of medicines;
- (2) in collaboration with governments and civil society, to strengthen WHO's technical support to Member States in their efforts to establish or strengthen, where appropriate, multidisciplinary national bodies for monitoring use of medicines, and implementing national programmes for the rational use of medicines;
- (3) to strengthen the coordination of international financial and technical support for rational use of medicines;
- (4) to promote research, particularly on development of sustainable interventions for rational use of medicines at all levels of the health sector, both public and private;
- (5) to promote discussion among health authorities, professionals and patients on the rational use of medicines;
- (6) to report to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly, and subsequently biennially, on progress achieved, problems encountered and further actions proposed in the implementation of WHO's programmes to promote rational use of medicines.

(Eleventh plenary meeting, 23 May 2007 –
Committee B, second report)

Improving the containment of antimicrobial resistance

WHA58.27

The Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on rational use of medicines by prescribers and patients;¹

Acknowledging that the containment of antimicrobial resistance is a prerequisite for attaining several of the internationally agreed health-related goals contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

Recalling the recommendations of the Second International Conference on Improving Use of Medicines (Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2004);

Recalling also the findings of relevant WHO reports, including "Priority medicines for Europe and the world",² and the Copenhagen Recommendation from the European Union conference on "The Microbial Threat" (Copenhagen, 1998);

Aware that the spread of antimicrobial resistance recognizes no national boundaries and has reached proportions that require urgent action at national, regional and global levels, especially in view of the decreasing development of new antimicrobial agents;

Recalling previous resolutions WHA39.27 and WHA47.13 on the rational use of drugs, WHA51.17 on antimicrobial resistance, and WHA54.14 on global health security;

Recognizing the efforts of WHO, in collaboration with governments, universities, the private sector and nongovernmental

¹ Document A58/14.

² Document WHO/EDM/PAR/2004.7.

organizations, to contain antimicrobial resistance, thereby contributing to prevention of the spread of infectious diseases;

Noting that, despite some progress, the strategy for containment of antimicrobial resistance has not been widely implemented;³

Wishing to intensify efforts to contain antimicrobial resistance and to promote rational use of antimicrobial agents by providers and consumers in order to improve global health security;

Re-emphasizing the need for a coherent, comprehensive and integrated national approach to promoting the containment of antimicrobial resistance;

Convinced that it is time for governments, the health professions, civil society, the private sector and the international community to reaffirm their commitment to ensuring that sufficient investment is made to contain antimicrobial resistance,

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to ensure the development of a coherent, comprehensive and integrated national approach to implementing the strategy for containment of antimicrobial resistance taking account, where appropriate, of financial and other incentives that might have a harmful impact on policies for prescribing and dispensing;
- (2) to enhance rational use of antimicrobial agents, including through development and enforcement of national standard-practice guidelines for common infections, in public and private health sectors;
- (3) to strengthen, as appropriate, their legislation on availability of medicines in general and of antimicrobial agents in particular;
- (4) to mobilize human and financial resources in order to minimize the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance, in particular by promotion of the rational use of antimicrobial agents by providers and consumers;
- (5) to monitor effectively and to control nosocomial infections;

³ Document WHO/CDS/CSR/DRS/2001.2.

- (6) to monitor regularly the use of antimicrobial agents and the level of antimicrobial resistance in all relevant sectors;
 - (7) to share actively knowledge and experience on best practices in promoting the rational use of antimicrobial agents;
2. REQUESTS the Director-General:
- (1) to strengthen the leadership role of WHO in containing antimicrobial resistance;
 - (2) to accelerate the implementation of resolutions WHA51.17 and WHA54.14 concerning the containment of antimicrobial resistance by expanding and strengthening the provision of technical support to Member States, at their request;
 - (3) to collaborate with other relevant programmes and partners in order to promote the appropriate use of antimicrobial agents in the context of the rational use of medicines, by scaling up interventions proven to be effective, and to provide support for the sharing of knowledge and experience among stakeholders on best practice;
 - (4) to provide support for the generation of up-to-date information on antimicrobial resistance at regional and subregional levels and to make this available to Member States and other parties;
 - (5) to provide support for gathering and sharing of evidence on cost-effective interventions for prevention and control of antimicrobial resistance at national and local levels;
 - (6) to report to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly, and subsequently on a regular basis, on progress achieved, problems encountered and further actions proposed in implementing this resolution.

(Ninth plenary meeting, 25 May 2005 –
Committee A, seventh report)

Global health security: epidemic alert and response

WHA54.14

The Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolutions WHA48.7 on the International Health Regulations, WHA48.13 on new, emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, and WHA51.17 on antimicrobial resistance;

Recalling that public health is a priority for development and that combating communicable diseases, which are a major burden in terms of human mortality and morbidity, provides important and immediate opportunities for progress;

Mindful of the globalization of trade and of the movement of people, animals, goods and food products, as well as the speed with which these take place;

Recognizing that, as a result, any upsurge in cases of infectious disease in a given country is potentially of concern for the international community,

1. EXPRESSES its support for:
 - (1) ongoing work on the revision of the International Health Regulations, including criteria to define what constitutes a health emergency of international concern;
 - (2) development of a global strategy for containment and, where possible, prevention of antimicrobial drug resistance;
 - (3) collaboration between WHO and all potential technical partners in the area of epidemic alert and response, including relevant public sectors, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector;

2. URGES Member States:
 - (1) to participate actively in the verification and validation of surveillance data and information concerning health emergencies of international concern, together with WHO and other technical partners;
 - (2) to develop and update national preparation and response plans;
 - (3) to develop training for the staff involved and the exchange of good practice between specialists in response to alerts;
 - (4) to update regularly information on the resources available for the surveillance and control of infectious diseases;
 - (5) to designate a focal point for the International Health Regulations;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to devise relevant international tools, and to provide technical support to Member States for developing or strengthening preparedness and response activities against risks posed by biological agents, as an integral part of their emergency management programmes;
 - (2) to provide technical support to Member States for developing intervention programmes that prevent epidemics and respond to communicable disease threats and emergencies, particularly with regard to epidemiological investigations, laboratory diagnoses and community and clinical management of cases;
 - (3) to make appropriate arrangements for the development of regional preparedness and response plans;
 - (4) to provide support to Member States for strengthening their capacity to detect and respond rapidly to communicable disease threats and emergencies, especially by developing the laboratory skills needed for diagnosis and providing training in epidemiological methods for use in the field, particularly in the most exposed countries;
 - (5) to make available relevant information on public health risks to Member States, relevant intergovernmental organizations and technical partners;
 - (6) to provide technical support to Member States in the implementation of national efforts to contain and prevent resistance to antimicrobials.

(Ninth plenary meeting, 21 May 2001 – A54/VR/9)

Emerging and other communicable diseases: antimicrobial resistance

WHA51.17

The Fifty-first World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Director-General on emerging and other communicable diseases: antimicrobial resistance;

Concerned about the rapid emergence and spread of human pathogens resistant to available antibiotics;

Aware that antimicrobial resistance is increasingly hampering treatment of infectious diseases as a result either of totally ineffective antibiotics currently available or of the high cost of “new generation” agents;

Concerned about the extensive use of antibiotics in food production, which may further accelerate the development of such resistance,

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to encourage the development of sustainable systems to detect antimicrobial-resistant pathogens, thereby increasing awareness of antimicrobial resistance, and to monitor volumes and patterns of use of antimicrobial agents and the impact of control measures;
- (2) to develop educational programmes for professional staff and the general public to encourage the appropriate and cost-effective use of antimicrobial agents;
- (3) to improve practices to prevent the spread of infection and thereby the spread of resistant pathogens, and to promote appropriate antibiotic use in health care facilities and in the community;

- (4) to develop measures to protect health workers from the hazards of resistant pathogens;
- (5) to develop measures to prohibit the dispensing of antimicrobials without the prescription of a qualified health-care professional;
- (6) to strengthen legislation to prevent the manufacture, sale and distribution of counterfeit antimicrobial agents and the sale of antibiotics on the informal market;
- (7) to take measures to encourage the reduced use of antimicrobials in food-animal production;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to support countries in their efforts to control antimicrobial resistance through the strengthening of laboratory capacity for the detection of resistant pathogens;
- (2) to collaborate in developing sustainable national policies for rational antimicrobial use, not only in human medicine, but also in food-animal production;
- (3) to collaborate with the public health sector, the pharmaceutical industry, universities and institutions concerned with research, laboratory testing, marketing, prescription and consumption of antimicrobial agents, in order to encourage the sharing of knowledge and resources to combat antimicrobial resistance;
- (4) to devise means for the gathering and sharing of information by countries and regions concerning resistance in certain pathogens and to promote international cooperation among Member States;
- (5) to develop programmes of information and education for prescribers and users of antimicrobial agents;
- (6) to encourage promotion of research and development of new antimicrobial agents.

(Tenth plenary meeting, 16 May 1998 – A51/VR/10)

- Antibiotics save lives
- Take antibiotics as prescribed for the full duration
- Vaccinate children against preventable diseases
- Follow a healthy lifestyle and reduce the need for antibiotics
- Throw away old medicines and never self-medicate

Combat antimicrobial resistance— No action today, no cure tomorrow



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