

Antimicrobial Resistance: Risk Associated With Antibiotic Overuse and Initiatives to prevail over the challenges

Jason Clement Browne^{1*}, Uma Maheswari M¹, Karuna priyachitra¹

¹ MMM College of Health Sciences, Mogappair, Chennai-600037

*Corresponding author e.mail: jasbro1998@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Antimicrobial resistance is a global public health challenge, which has accelerated by the overuse of antibiotics worldwide. Increased antimicrobial resistance is the cause of severe infections, complications, longer hospital stays and increased mortality. Overprescribing of antibiotics is associated with an increased risk of adverse effects, more frequent re-attendance. Antibiotic overprescribing is a particular problem in primary care, where viruses cause most infections. About 90% of all antibiotic prescriptions are issued by general practitioners, and respiratory tract infections are the leading cause of prescribing. Interventions should encompass the enforcement of the policy of prohibiting the over-the-counter sale of antibiotics, the use of antimicrobial stewardship programmes, the active participation of clinicians in audits, the promotion of delayed antibiotic prescribing strategies, the enhancement of communication skills with patients with the aid of information brochures and the performance of more pragmatic studies in primary care with outcomes that are of clinicians' interest, such as complications and clinical outcomes. However, in the case of ethical conflict, non-maleficence and justice take precedence. We know that we can reduce antibiotic prescribing in many of the infections that are currently unnecessarily treated without compromising our patients' health. Moreover, we know that antibiotics can stop being effective in the short and medium term. The use of the strategies discussed in this paper will help GPs to reduce prescribing of antibiotics. Our duty is to prescribe antibiotics only when they are necessary, i.e. in less than 20% of the infectious seen in primary care.