

Pakistan Must Act Now or Put Millions of Lives on a Risk of Antimicrobial Resistance

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The review on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) prepared by a panel chaired by Jim O'Neill estimates that by 2050, 10 million human lives a year and 100 trillion US dollars of economy are at risk because of resistant infections and the impact of AMR will fall on low and middle-income countries.¹ The AMR has been detected in all parts of the world and is one of the serious threat and greatest challenge to global public health. World Health Organization (WHO) in 2014 presented data from 114 countries on AMR and documented in every region of the world.²

Pakistan has a high frequency of AMR in various commonly found pathogens including *Staphylococcus aureus*,³ *Acinetobacter baumannii*,⁴ *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*,⁵ *Escherichia coli*,⁶ *Salmonella typhi*,⁷ *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*,⁸ and *Helicobacter pylori*.⁹ The AMR is also reported by the authors from our neighboring countries including China,¹⁰ India¹¹ and Iran.¹²

There are number of causes associated with AMR specifically toward the antibiotics in Pakistan including lack of AMR surveillance at national level, quack doctors do not know and follow the recommended eradication therapies. The antibiotics are prescribed without performing susceptibility testing, self medication. There is a indiscriminate use of antibiotics by patients to treat the various infections and also un-necessary antibiotics use in livestock and agriculture.

The WHO conducted a survey in 2013-14 and reported that Pakistan has no national action plan to tackle AMR.¹³ Following the strategic objectives of the WHO Global Action Plan for AMR, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Pakistan launched National Strategic Framework that is the first step to combat AMR.¹⁴ If State of Pakistan fails to tackle the AMR issue now, there will be more

devastating loss in terms of people and economy to this country in future. Therefore, the higher authorities and concern institutions should pay serious attention and huge commitment for combating AMR throughout the country using National Strategic Framework.

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