

Pacific Heads of Health Meeting

Réunion des directeurs de la santé du Pacifique

Strengthening antibiotic stewardship and antimicrobial resistance surveillance in the Pacific

1. BACKGROUND

- Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a global health and development threat. It requires urgent multisectoral action in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- WHO has declared that AMR is one of the top 10 global public health threats facing humanity.
- Misuse and overuse of antimicrobials are the main drivers in the development of drug-resistant pathogens.
- Lack of clean water and sanitation and inadequate infection prevention and control promotes the spread of microbes, some of which can be resistant to antimicrobial treatment.
- The cost of AMR to the economy is significant. In addition to death and disability, prolonged illness results in longer hospital stays, the need for more expensive medicines and financial challenges for those impacted.
- Without effective antimicrobials, the success of modern medicine in treating infections, including during major surgery and cancer chemotherapy, would be at increased risk.

2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

SPC, WHO, PIHOA and PPTC developed a training program for AMR surveillance inclusive of Microbiology Microorganism culture, identification and sensitivity testing, Infection prevention and control as a way of controlling resistant organisms in the hospital and Antimicrobial Stewardship. Trainings that were delivered prior to 2019 was mostly focused on combating AMR in the Hospital setting, while the recent training in Vanuatu was conducted using One Health Approach inclusive of Agriculture, Fisheries, Animal Health where antimicrobial are used for varying purposes. There were gaps identified in countries during the trainings and local health/One health officers were trained on ways to address the gaps and bring together an Antimicrobial stewardship team that monitors antimicrobial use, recommend antibiotic use according to trend of antimicrobial resistance in the country and put in place measures to prevent the spread of resistant organisms in healthcare settings.

3. CHALLENGES

3.1. Slow progress of Combat AMR activities in some Pacific Island countries including endorsement of AMR action plan and formation of Antimicrobial Stewardship team.

3.2. Weak Surveillance system, weak microbiology service, data collection and data sharing

3.3 One health holistic approach to combat AMR exists only in very few countries in the region.

4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

4.1 Recommendations for governments

- All countries health system to implement measures to combat AMR; measures inclusive of a good surveillance system and proper isolation and Infection prevention and control procedures for MRO infected cases.

- Laboratories need to be strengthened with adequate resources inclusive of testing supplies, laboratory staff and robust laboratory information system that enable detection and reporting of Multi Resistant Organisms in a timely manner.
- All countries major hospital should have an Antimicrobial Stewardship committee that monitors antimicrobial use and put in place regulations for AMR preventative measures.

4.2 Recommendations for development partners:

- Provide Technical assistance to countries to support implementation of AMR activities in countries
- Continue to work together with countries to endorse AMR action plan that sets the framework for combat AMR program in countries.