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A SCENARIO-BASED EXERCISE TO TEST PREPAREDNESS FOR CRITICAL ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANT ORGANISMS

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1. BACKGROUND

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the top 10 global public health threats facing humanity. AMR is a growing threat in Pacific Island Countries, with the impact potentially being disproportionate due to a higher burden of infections, reduced laboratory infrastructure for pathogen surveillance and diagnostics and limited regulation on the use of antimicrobials amongst humans and animals.

2. *COMBAT-AMR: Combating the threat of antimicrobial resistance in Pacific Island Countries* is a project supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security. A consortium of organisations from around the world, have partnered to deliver the project. The project aims to implement capacity building and training activities to support the prevention, diagnosis, surveillance and management of AMR pathogens in Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. They work in partnership with government, National AMR Committees and public health counterparts, under the framework of National AMR Action Plans and priorities.

2. METHOD

3. Situation and needs assessments were conducted for the four primary themes of the project: infection prevention and control, antimicrobial stewardship, laboratory capacity and surveillance, and animal health. Following presentation of the results of these assessments to the relevant in-country key partners, a tailored workplan was developed for each theme individually for each country.

4. As part of capacity building identified for Fiji, a tabletop exercise was conducted for the Fiji's national referral hospital, the Colonial War Memorial Hospital (CWMH). A tabletop exercise is an activity that uses a simulated scenario to test or understand a system in an informal and low-stress manner. The tabletop exercise was conducted during a visit by the COMBAT-AMR team to Fiji in May 2022. Relevant staff from CWMH workforce were invited to participate in a facilitated interactive discussion. Through the evolving scenario staff were able to review and discuss their roles, what actions they would undertake or be responsible for and what resources would be available to manage the given scenario. The overall aim of the exercise was to test CWMH's preparedness and response to infections and outbreaks caused by organisms with critical antimicrobial resistance. Findings were analysed to determine where additional resources were needed to be developed to improve or enhance their system for detecting and managing these organisms.

3. CONCLUSION

5. A scenario-based tabletop exercise was used to test the preparedness of CWMH, a major referral hospital in Fiji. As a result of the exercise, an action plan was developed to address issues identified and build local capacity to manage critical antimicrobial resistant organisms.
