

WHO WRITES NEW PRESCRIPTION TO PREVENT MISUSE OF ANTIBIOTICS

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

Rx: Keep it simple. This is the World Health Organisation's (WHO) prescription to combat the growing menace of antibiotic abuse and burgeoning resistance worldwide.

In its latest advisory, WHO has suggested the adoption of 'Access, Watch and Reserve', an approach that specifies which antibiotics to use for the most common and serious infections, which ones ought to be available at all times in the healthcare system, and those that must be used sparingly, or reserved and used only as a last resort.

WHO estimates that more than 50% of antibiotics in many countries are used inappropriately for treatment of viruses, when they only treat bacterial infections, or are the wrong choice of antibiotic (broader spectrum), thus contributing to the spread of antimicrobial resistance.

The new campaign aims to increase the proportion of global consumption of antibiotics in the 'Access' group to at least 60%, and to reduce use of the antibiotics most at risk of resistance.

Using 'Access' antibiotics lowers the risk of resistance because they are 'narrow-spectrum' antibiotics (that target a specific microorganism rather than several). They are also less costly because they are available in generic formulations.

In India, the Health Ministry has made it mandatory to display a 5mm-thick red vertical band on the packaging of prescription-only drugs to sensitise people to be cautious while buying these medicines that are widely sold without prescriptions.

WHO has now urged all countries to adopt the Access, Watch and Reserve guidelines to reduce the spread of antimicrobial resistance, adverse events and costs.

When antibiotics stop working effectively, more expensive treatments and hospital admissions are needed, taking a heavy toll on already stretched health budgets.

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Detox is so 2018. The thing to do this year is to reset. To pretend that the old did not exist — that you (I) did not overeat, overdrink and

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