The PARIS declaration against antibiotic resistance

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The growing numbers of antibiotic resistant bacteria pose a major ecological threat. This alarming increase in bacterial resistance, combined with an almost complete absence of new antimicrobial drugs, has become one of the main public health problems of our time. Antibiotics are a unique class of medications, as misuse in one patient may affect efficacy for many others. Antibiotics target bacteria, living organisms that can rapidly evolve and acquire mechanisms that enable them to become resistant rapidly. Emerging resistant bacteria can easily be transmitted to different individuals. Treatment failures because of multidrug resistant (MDR) bacteria, once limited to hospitals, now occur in the community. It is estimated that at a minimum 25000 patients in Europe, and 23000 in the USA die each year from infections caused by resistant bacteria.

Antibiotic resistance is directly related to the volume of antibiotics used. We are using increasing amounts of antibiotics in health care and agriculture, and discharging these active drugs into nature. The environmental impact of antibiotic release is enormous, promoting the development and dissemination of antimicrobial resistance genes.

We must change this and adopt proactive strategies, much like those used to save endangered species. To preserve the efficacy of antibiotics and to stabilize antibiotic-susceptible bacterial ecosystems should be a global goal.

Safeguarding antibiotics will require a concerted effort by patients and prescribers. The primary goal of WAAAR is to raise awareness about the urgency and magnitude of the threat, and to catalyse an international dialog to find effective responses. The Alliance is dedicated to lobbying actively for antibiotic preservation and to raising awareness among antibiotic
prescribers, politicians and policy-makers, patient safety and advocacy groups, pharmaceutical industry, international health organizations, and general population. Individual actions, no matter how well intended, are doomed to failure unless we can create an international dialogue, a common sense of purpose and broad consensus on how best to proceed.

WAAAR advocates the 5 following actions:

• Cautious, controlled and surveyed approaches to the use of antibiotics:
  - in hospitals, long term care facilities and primary care.
  - in husbandry, agriculture and veterinary setting; Ban of the use of antibiotics in animals as growth promoters or for prophylaxis.
  - Tracking of antimicrobial use and resistance at institution and country level (CDCs) with comparative statistics published at least every 12 months.
  - Restricting certain key antibiotics to human therapeutic use (e.g., carbapenems), and limiting the use of critically important antibiotics in animals.
  - Developing new and using available rapid and accurate diagnostic tests to rapidly select appropriate, targeted antibiotics, and limit the length of therapy.
  - Developing a user fee for antibiotic prescription in veterinary practice.

• Informational and educational efforts for change
  - Large information and awareness campaigns directed to the public on the proper use of antibiotics.
  - Education and training programs for health care professionals (schools and continuous medical education) on the proper use of antibiotics, including indications, dosing and duration of therapy.

• Prevention
  - Relentless efforts to prevent cross-transmission of MDR organisms (MDROs), in particular via hand hygiene, standard precautions, and isolation procedures.
  - Progressive elimination of the “over the counter” sales of antibiotics.
  - Control of sanitary conditions around the world, in particular related to water safety and used water management.
  - Use of available vaccines and development of new anti-bacterial vaccines.

• Basic and applied research, and drug development
  - Increased support to basic and applied research efforts in human and veterinary medicine.
- Incentives to stimulate research of new drugs via fast track developments of new antibiotics.

- New economic business models to support the cost of innovation while safeguarding public health interests.

- Development of non antibiotic compounds directed at specific bacterial physiological targets.

- Query to the UNESCO to include the “lives saved by antibiotics” in the list of the world immaterial heritage.

We urge all of you to participate to this action. Antibiotics must be protected. It is an absolute emergency, and it is our duty. Please, help us to act now!

About WAAAR

WAAAR is a group of 700 individuals from 55 different countries representing all the key stakeholders (physicians, veterinarians, microbiologists, pharmacists, nurses, evolutionary biologists, ecologists, environmentalists, and including patient advocacy groups). The Alliance receives support from more than 140 learned societies or professional groups throughout the world. It is a nonprofit organization open to professionals and consumers worldwide. WAAAR receives no funding from the pharmaceutical industry.

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