



Drug-Resistant Infections Emerging as Major Public Health Problem in India



Context

- **Event:** CIDSCON 2025 (Conference of Infectious Diseases Society of India)
 - **Location:** Mumbai
 - **Focus:** Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and its growing threat to India's health system
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Scale of the Problem

- **Estimated annual deaths in India due to AMR:** ~300,000
 - Drug-resistant infections are now among the leading causes of preventable deaths.
 - Hospital-acquired infections are showing rising resistance to commonly used antibiotics, making treatment increasingly difficult.
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Key Insights from Experts

1. Misuse of Antibiotics

- Rampant over-prescription without proper diagnostic tests.
- Self-medication and easy over-the-counter antibiotic purchase by the public.
- Widespread use of antibiotics in animal husbandry and agriculture, contributing to resistance.

2. Weak Infection Control Measures

- **Inadequate hospital infection control practices (hand hygiene, sterilization, isolation wards).**
- **Poor public awareness of AMR dangers.**
- **Resistance often spreads silently in communities due to poor sanitation and overcrowding.**

3. Educational & Training Gaps

- **Medical education in India still gives limited emphasis to infection prevention and antimicrobial stewardship.**
- **Experts at CIDSCON called for revised medical curricula to include:**
 - **Rational use of antibiotics**
 - **AMR surveillance practices**
 - **Patient education on medication adherence**

4. Global & National Implications

- **AMR could become a bigger health crisis than cancer or diabetes if unchecked.**
 - **India's role is critical since it is a major producer and consumer of antibiotics.**
 - **Experts stressed the need for India to strengthen its National Action Plan on AMR, aligned with WHO's global strategy.**
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Suggested Interventions

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Educate people about not demanding antibiotics unnecessarily.
 - **Regulations:** Stricter control on over-the-counter antibiotic sales.
 - **Hospital Stewardship Programs:** Rational prescribing, audits, and monitoring of antibiotic use.
 - **Surveillance Networks:** Strengthen AMR surveillance at district and state levels.
 - **Investment in Research:** Encourage development of new antibiotics and alternative therapies.
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Broader Impact

- **AMR poses risks not only to infectious disease treatment, but also to routine medical care like:**
 - Organ transplants
 - Chemotherapy
 - Complex surgeries
 - Neonatal care
- **Without effective antibiotics, these treatments carry much higher risk of fatal infections.**