Antibiotic resistance making it difficult to treat diseases

Bacteria causing infections such as gonorrhea are becoming particularly resistant

New Delhi, 27 October 2017: As per recent reports, antibiotic resistance is making gonorrhea ‘much harder and sometimes impossible’ to treat. The report cites data from around 77 countries, one of which is India. About 11.4 million in the southeast Asian Region, including India, are infected with the disease every year. The bacteria that cause gonorrhea are becoming particularly resistant. Every time, a new class of antibiotics is used to treat the infection, the bacteria evolve to resist them.

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection also known as the 'clap' or 'drip'. It is caused by the bacterium \textit{Neisseria gonorrhoeae}, which grows and multiplies easily in the mucous membranes of the body. It can grow in the warm, moist areas of the reproductive tract as also in the mouth, throat, and anus.

Speaking about this, Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement, said, “Antibiotic resistance is a growing concern and its impact on patients and communities is known to all. This is a public health problem, one which is rapidly spreading across the globe, with not enough resources to control it. Antibiotic resistance has made it harder for us to treat many infections such as typhoid, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and now gonorrhea. Antibiotic resistance prolongs hospitalization, and increases the cost of treatment and the risk of death. Several studies have also corroborated the adverse impact of antibiotic resistance on health. Doctors as well as patients should be aware about and advocate judicious use of antibiotics. Over prescription and self-prescription, both, need to be checked.

Taking cognizance of the impact of antibiotic-resistant infections, IMA has proposed several initiatives to tackle this public health threat – “Jaroorat Bhi Hai Kya”, “3A Avoid Antibiotic Abuse campaign”, “Use Wisely not Widely”, “Think Before you Ink”.

The treatment recommendations for gonorrhea have changed substantially during the last few years. Due to a high rate of antimicrobial resistance, fluoroquinolones are no longer recommended to treat gonorrhea.
Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “Improving and adhering to diagnostic tests for various diseases will help curb the inappropriate use of antibiotics, which compromises measures to control antimicrobial resistance. The imminent need of the hour is to address this issue. A coordinated intervention designed to improve and measure the appropriate use of antimicrobials by promoting the selection of the most appropriate antimicrobial drug regimen, dose, duration of therapy, and route of administration.”

The following tips can help in preventing gonorrhea.

- Talk with your partner about sexually transmitted infections before starting a sexual relationship. Assess your risks and remember that it is quite possible to be infected with an STI without knowing it.
- Avoid sexual contact with anyone who has symptoms of an STI or who may have been exposed to an STI.
- Avoid having multiple partners as this can increase your chances of contracting such infections.
- Use adequate protection such as condoms to reduce the chances of infections.
- Ensure that you take adequate care of hygiene and cleanliness before and after sexual contact.

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About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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