Missed fungal infection diagnosis may up antibiotic resistance

*Missing a diagnosis of fungal disease causes doctors to overprescribe antibiotics, increasing harmful resistance to valuable antimicrobial drugs.*

**New Delhi, Feb 7, 2017:** Indiscriminate use of antibiotics is a major contributory factor in the escalating problem of antibiotic resistance. The first global report on antibiotic resistance “Antimicrobial resistance: global report on surveillance” released by the WHO in 2014 highlighted antibiotic resistance as a significant public health problem, which was prevalent worldwide across all age groups.

A new study published in the February 2017 issue of CDC’s journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases* says that lack of routine diagnostic testing for fungal diseases exacerbates the problem of antimicrobial drug empiricism.

**Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr R N Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA** in a joint statement said that, “Staying vigilant about fungal infections and their underlying resistance mechanisms is necessary to reduce drug resistance. Some species of fungi are naturally resistant to certain types of antifungal medications while others may develop resistance over time as a result of improper antifungal use—for example, improper dosages or treatment schedule. Missed diagnosis of fungal infections in hospitals and intensive care units, resulting in inappropriate use of broad-spectrum antibacterial drugs, for instance, in patients with invasive candidiasis is a major contributor.”

“Improving and adhering to diagnostic tests for fungal diseases will help curb the inappropriate use of antibiotics, which compromises measures to control antimicrobial resistance. Inexpensive, rapid diagnostic tests are available for important fungal infections but are not being widely used. Better training is needed to encourage health care practitioners to test for fungal infections so the correct drugs are administered”, added **Dr K K Aggarwal**.

**Medical practitioners can help curb fungal infection based antibiotic resistance in following ways:**
✓ Prescribe antifungal medications appropriately with optimal dosage and medication schedule. Monitor if the patient is duly following the same.
✓ Document the dose, duration, and indication for every antifungal prescription.
✓ Stay aware of locally emerging antifungal resistance patterns.
✓ Participate in and lead efforts within your hospital to improve antifungal prescribing practices.
✓ Follow hand hygiene and other infection control measures with every patient.

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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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