Press Release

Antibiotic-related research in India must be accelerated: IMA

Spurious use of antibiotics has resulted in several important life-saving drugs becoming obsolete. Research towards developing new antibiotics is imperative as we head towards the post-antibiotic era.

New Delhi, Jan 14, 2017: Antibiotic resistance has emerged as a global threat, and the problem is particularly stark in India. The total mortality burden of infectious diseases in India is about 416/1000 persons every year. In this scenario, simple infections have the potential to turn deadly, and the situation clearly warrants that research in antibiotic development must be accelerated.

The problem of antibiotic resistance in India is further exacerbated by a constellation of factors like poor public health systems and hospital infection, high rates of infectious disease, inexpensive antibiotics and rising incomes. All of these factors contribute to increasing prevalence of resistant microbes, resulting in the rising burden of infection-related mortality like neonatal sepsis.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr KK 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, “Antibiotics work by targeting specific mechanisms within the microorganisms essential for growth and survival. However, bacteria have certain defence systems that gradually evade these effects, and become resistant. Spurious use of antibiotics can speed up this defence system much faster than we can counteract them. The pipeline of antibiotic drug development is fast drying up. There is a need to speed up and support research on new drug molecules and drug targets. The idea of repurposing old antibiotics also merits more attention”.

“Over prescription and unguided over-the-counter usage of antibiotics have reduced efficacy of valuable drugs like carbapenems and colistin. We are fast running out of life-saving options as the medical community at present heavily relies on antibiotics right from treating simple infections to complex surgical procedures. Doctors need to put an end to unnecessary prescriptions, and patients themselves need to check over-the-counter use of antibiotics. The use of antibiotics in poultry and farming also needs to be vigilantly monitored. Time is short, and R&D initiatives need to look for alternatives to salvage this situation”, added Dr Aggarwal.

Medical science still lacks a clear knowledge about how resistance develops and evolves. There are several gaps in the understanding of cellular and molecular processes involved. These factors make...
antibiotic research a very fertile ground and concerned authorities need to wake up to the absolute need and potential of this field.

Source:

http://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1001974

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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 29 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 53,000 doctors as its members through more than 1650 active local branches spread across the country.

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