

PRESS RELEASE

Rates of carbapenem-resistant infections continue to increase in Europe

Stockholm, 15 November 2013

On the occasion of the 6th European Antibiotic Awareness Day, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is releasing new EU-wide data on antibiotic resistance (EARS-Net annual report) showing a marked increase of carbapenem-resistant infections. The carbapenems are a major last-line class of antibiotics used to treat healthcare-associated infections. The proportion of *Klebsiella pneumoniae* bloodstream infections that is resistant to the carbapenems has increased between 2009 and 2012, to above 5% in 5 countries, mostly in the south of Europe. A new serious concern is the emergence and spread of carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter* species, which is above 25% in eight of 18 countries reporting data. This indicates even more seriously limited options for treatment of patients with *Acinetobacter* infections.

ECDC Director, Dr. Marc Sprenger said: *"The data show that carbapenem-resistant infections are increasing in numbers and geographic spread across Europe. Since 2009, it has become increasingly common for hospitals to be faced with treating patients that have carbapenem-resistant infections, often meaning that old and toxic drugs are used. Given their very high proportion of carbapenem resistance, Acinetobacter infections already are serious problem for hospitals in many European countries."*

As well as EARS-Net, ECDC is also today releasing the results of a survey (EuSCAPE) based on a self-assessment by national experts from 38 countries of carbapenem-resistant infections in Europe, done for ECDC by the University Medical Centre in Groningen in the Netherlands. The results indicate that the spread of carbapenem-resistant infections is much wider than indicated by EARS-Net, which only includes the most severe infections, that is bloodstream infections. When other infections such as respiratory and urinary tract infections are also considered, almost all countries have reported cases, and many countries have reported regional spread, inter-regional spread, or even an endemic situation.

As part of the survey, the experts also reported on the availability of national guidance documents for the control of carbapenem-resistant infections. Just over half of the countries participating in the survey have such national guidance documents in place. These are, for the most part, the countries that reported outbreaks, regional spread or an endemic situation. However, 17 of 38 countries still lack guidance for control of carbapenem-resistant infections, and only 2 countries reported having specific guidance to deal with carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter* infections.

Dr. Marc Sprenger further commented: *"There is an urgent need for all European countries to have in place national guidance documents, so that hospitals faced with carbapenem-resistant infections can take action to control the spread and minimise the impact of outbreaks on patients. Together with infection control measures, improving antibiotic use is the most important action needed to greatly slow the very worrying development and spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria."*

To mark European Antibiotic Awareness Day, we will see activities promoting prudent use of antibiotics under the banner "Everyone is responsible" being done in more than 40 countries across Europe during the week of 18 November. ECDC is also cooperating with its partners in other regions of the world, and campaigns on prudent antibiotic use are taking place in the United States, Canada and Australia during the week of 18 November.

MORE INFORMATION:

About European Antibiotic Awareness Day

The European Antibiotic Awareness Day is a European health initiative coordinated by ECDC which aims to provide a platform and support for national campaigns on the prudent use of antibiotics. Each year across Europe, the European Antibiotic Awareness Day is marked by national campaigns on the prudent use of antibiotics during the week of 18 November. Prudent use means only using antibiotics when they are needed, with the correct dose, dosage intervals and duration of the course.

For more information, visit: <http://antibiotic.ecdc.europa.eu>

European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network (EARS-Net)

Further information on surveillance of antibiotic resistance in EU/EEA countries is available from the EARS-Net website and interactive database: <http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/activities/surveillance/EARS-Net/Pages/index.aspx>

Other relevant links

ECDC multi-media news release

<http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/eaad/Pages/EAAD2013-multimedia-news-release.aspx>

EARS-Net (annual report and interactive database)

<http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/activities/surveillance/EARS-Net/Pages/index.aspx>

EuSCAPE report

<http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/eaad/Pages/EAAD2013-multimedia-news-release.aspx>

ECDC risk assessment on the spread of carbapenem-resistant infections through patient transfer

http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/110913_Risk_assessment_resistant_CPE.pdf

ESAC-Net (interactive database)

http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/antimicrobial_resistance/esac-net-database/Pages/database.aspx

ECDC point prevalence survey on healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial use (report and interactive database)

http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/Healthcare-associated_infections/database/Pages/database.aspx

http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/Healthcare-associated_infections/point-prevalence-survey/Pages/Point-prevalence-survey.aspx

WHO/Europe – Antimicrobial resistance

<http://www.euro.who.int/amr>

Campaign in the United States – Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work

<http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart/campaign-materials/week/index.html>

Campaign in Canada – AntibioticAwareness.ca

<http://antibioticawareness.ca/>

Campaign in Australia – Antibiotic Awareness Week

http://www.nps.org.au/bemedicinewise/antibiotic_resistance/antibiotic_awareness_week

Further information

More information on antibiotic resistance is available on our website: <http://ecdc.europa.eu>

ECDC press office

Tel: +46 (0)8 586 01 678

Email: press@ecdc.europa.eu

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is an EU agency tasked with identifying, assessing and communicating threats to human health posed by infectious diseases. It supports the work of public health authorities in the EU and EEA Member States.