

## PRESS RELEASE

# Combating resistance to last-line antibiotics in the EU still a priority

Brussels, 16 November 2015

**Survey results released by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) show that the situation continues to worsen with regard to the spread of carbapenemase-producing *Enterobacteriaceae* (CPE) in the EU, with 8 countries reporting an interregional spread and 3 countries an endemic situation. This means that in these 3 countries most hospitals are repeatedly seeing patients that cannot be treated with carbapenems, a last-line antibiotic group. On the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> European Antibiotic Awareness Day, ECDC is releasing the results of the European Survey of Carbapenemase-Producing *Enterobacteriaceae* (EuSCAPE) on the spread in Europe's hospitals of bacteria resistant to carbapenems. On the other hand, the survey also shows that national capacity for the containment of CPE in the EU is increasing.**

Vytenis Andriukaitis, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety said: "the ECDC results published today show that the threat of antibiotic resistance is increasing day by day. If left unchecked, it has the capacity to turn the clock back on medicine by a hundred years. We are working together with the Member States and our international partners to ensure that we strengthen the prevention and control of antimicrobial resistance across all sectors in a "one-health" approach and to secure the availability of new antimicrobial agents for the future".

ECDC is also releasing its latest data on antibiotic resistance (EARS-Net) and consumption (ESAC-Net) in Europe. Resistance continues to rise for most bacteria and antibiotics under surveillance; however, there are some exceptions like methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). For the first time, data show a significant decrease in antibiotic consumption in the community in five European countries: Denmark, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. Nevertheless, antibiotic consumption in the hospital sector, overall and for carbapenems, is still increasing.

ECDC Acting Director, Dr Andrea Ammon said: "The further spread of CPE, meaning bacteria resistant to carbapenems, a last-line group of antibiotics, is a cause for major concern in the EU as alternative options for the treatment of infected patients are limited. ECDC is encouraged to see that many EU countries have taken action to combat CPE, with national plans and other measures. However, there is more work to be done at all levels, local, national and European". Dr Ammon added: "Decreasing antibiotic consumption in 5 countries shows that Europe is moving towards a more prudent use of antibiotics in the community. Prudent antibiotic use in both the community and in hospitals is critical to make sure that we are getting the most out of existing drugs".

Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe said: "This year, on the first World Antibiotic Awareness Week, WHO/Europe releases its first report on antibiotic resistance in five non-EU countries of the European Region. Complementing the EU overview, data show that antibiotic resistance in non-EU countries is comparable with their EU neighbours. This is a first step to get a better insight of antibiotic resistance in the whole Region and provides guidance to countries that are building or strengthening their national surveillance. We call on all European countries to join WHO/Europe and ECDC's networks and complete the picture."

To mark European Antibiotic Awareness Day, activities promoting prudent use of antibiotics under the banner "European Antibiotic Awareness Day and the global health challenges of antibiotic resistance" are being organised in more than 40 countries across Europe. ECDC is a partner of the World Health Organization for the first World Antibiotic Awareness Week with the slogan, "Antibiotics: Handle with Care".

The European Antibiotic Awareness Day, the United States "Get Smart About Antibiotics" Week, the Canadian Antibiotic Awareness Week and the Australian Antibiotic Awareness Week, as well as activities in New Zealand and Japan, are being launched simultaneously during the week of 18 November in an effort to show global solidarity in addressing antibiotic resistance.

#### **MORE INFORMATION:**

##### **European Antibiotic Awareness Day**

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. Follow the European Antibiotic Awareness Day: #EAAD.

<http://antibiotic.ecdc.europa.eu>

##### **World Antibiotic Awareness Week**

The World Health Organization is leading a global campaign for the first World Antibiotic Awareness Week with the slogan "Antibiotics: Handle with Care". The campaign calls on individuals, governments and health and agriculture professionals to take action to address this urgent health problem. The first World Antibiotic Awareness Week will take place on 16-22 November. Follow the World Antibiotic Awareness Week:

#AntibioticResistance. [www.who.int/drugresistance](http://www.who.int/drugresistance).

##### **European Survey of Carbapenemase-Producing Enterobacteriaceae (EuSCAPE) project**

The EuSCAPE project aimed to improve understanding of the occurrence and spread of CPE and build laboratory capacity for their diagnosis and surveillance. In 2013, ECDC published the results of a pre-EuSCAPE self-assessment by national experts in 38 European countries, including all the EU countries, on the spread of CPE and the national capacity for containment of CPE in terms of surveillance, laboratory capacity, reference services and infection control measures. Following this self-assessment, EuSCAPE supported a laboratory capacity building workshop, an external quality assessment and the collection and characterisation of CPE isolates in European hospitals. In 2015, a post-EuSCAPE self-assessment was conducted to re-assess the spread of CPE in European countries, as well as improvements in the capacity for containment of CPE in these countries since 2013. According to this new survey, 29 countries have a national reference/expert laboratory for CPE; 27 countries have a national surveillance system dedicated to CPE; 22 countries have a system for notification of CPE cases to health authorities; 23 countries have national guidelines for prevention and control of CPE; and 10 countries have a national plan for containment of CPE. The results have been published in an article on Eurosurveillance on the 12 November

(<http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=21300>), and ECDC published, as part of the full multi-media news release, an "Evidence Brief" today.

##### **European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network (EARS-Net)**

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

##### **European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption Network (ESAC-Net)**

Further information on surveillance of antibiotic consumption in EU/EEA countries is available from the ESAC-Net interactive database:

[http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/antimicrobial\\_resistance/esac-net-database/Pages/database.aspx](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/antimicrobial_resistance/esac-net-database/Pages/database.aspx)

##### **Central Asian and Eastern European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance (CAESAR)**

The CAESAR (Central Asian and Eastern European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance) network is a joint initiative of the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID), the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) and WHO/Europe, to survey, contain and prevent emergence and spread of antibiotic resistance in the European Region.

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/antimicrobial-resistance/antimicrobial-resistance/central-asian-and-eastern-european-surveillance-of-antimicrobial-resistance-caesar>

## Other relevant links

ECDC multi-media news release

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

New EAAD Infographic on "How does antibiotic resistance spread?"

<http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/eaad/antibiotics-get-informed/infographics/Pages/antibiotic-resistance-spread.aspx>

WHO/Europe – Antimicrobial resistance

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

WHO Headquarters – Antimicrobial resistance and World Antibiotic Awareness Week

[www.who.int/drugresistance](http://www.who.int/drugresistance)

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

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

Campaign in Canada

[www.canada.ca/antibiotics](http://www.canada.ca/antibiotics) and [www.canada.ca/antibiotiques](http://www.canada.ca/antibiotiques)

Campaign in Australia – Antibiotic Awareness Week

<http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/our-work/healthcare-associated-infection/antimicrobial-stewardship/antibiotic-awareness-week/> and

[http://www.nps.org.au/bemedicinewise/antibiotic\\_resistance/antibiotic\\_awareness\\_week](http://www.nps.org.au/bemedicinewise/antibiotic_resistance/antibiotic_awareness_week)

## Further information

More information on antibiotic resistance and antibiotic consumption is available on our website:

<http://ecdc.europa.eu>

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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.