

COMMENTARY

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Clean Your Hands 5th May 2017: 'Fight antibiotic resistance - it's in your hands'

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Preventing healthcare-associated infections and reducing their avoidable impact on health systems is critical today to make facilities safer for patients worldwide [1]. In addition, the increasing public health burden of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) urges to action [2]. Stronger political commitment in reducing AMR was highlighted at the last United Nations General Assembly in September 2016 in New York.

Hand hygiene is at the center of effective infection prevention and control (IPC) to combat AMR spread [3]. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently issued guidelines on the Core Components of effective IPC programmes [1]. Their implementation will allow for strong, resilient health systems in all settings. The guidelines include the application of a multimodal strategy that consists in achieving system change (infrastructure and resources), raising awareness, education and training, monitoring and timely feedback and a patient safety culture that includes visibly committed leadership. This approach improves hand hygiene, reduces infections and saves lives [4]. Therefore, on the occasion of the upcoming 5th May 2017 Global Annual Hand Hygiene Day, WHO urges policy makers, top-level managers, IPC specialists and other health professionals to focus on the fight against AMR spread, by building ever stronger hand hygiene and IPC programmes (Table 1).

We encourage health facilities worldwide to endorse the WHO's 5th May 2017 campaign [5] and further improve hand hygiene, fight antibiotic resistance and commit to progressing towards adherence with all core components of IPC programmes.

Table 1 5th May 2017 key World Health Organization campaign messages

Health workers: "Clean your hands at the right times and stop the spread of antibiotic resistance."

Hospital Chief Executive Officers and Administrators: "Lead a year-round infection prevention and control programme to protect your patients from resistant infections."

Policy-makers: "Stop antibiotic resistance spread by making infection prevention and hand hygiene a national policy priority."

IPC leaders: "Implement WHO's Core Components for infection prevention, including hand hygiene, to combat antibiotic resistance."

Let's fight antibiotic resistance together; it's in our hands.



Abbreviations

AMR: Antimicrobial resistance; IPC: Infection prevention and control; WHO: World Health Organization.

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Consent for publication

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No patient-related data were collected. Ethical approval was therefore not required.

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