

## PRESS RELEASE

### Tackling antibiotic resistance – preventing the overuse of antibiotics in people and animals

Policy statements from the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy

The British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC) is calling for key global measures to reduce the overuse of antibiotics in people and animals. These measures will reduce antibiotic resistance (AMR), improve medical and veterinary practice and animal welfare.

The range of measures proposed includes:

- A global ban on the sale of antibiotics without a prescription and their direct marketing and selling to consumers via the internet.
- Improving access to essential antibiotics and vaccines for those living in resource-poor societies and for persons with a severe infection.
- A global ban on the use of all antibiotic growth promoters in animals.
- Not using any new classes of antibiotic in animals; reserving them for human use only.
- Providing consumers with information on food packaging to allow them to identify when antibiotics have been used in food production.

**Professor Laura Piddock, BSAC Chair in Public Engagement, Director of Antibiotic Action and Professor of Microbiology, University of Birmingham said:** *“Adopting a One Health approach and encouraging inter-disciplinary partnerships to share best practices between human and veterinary medicine, academia and industry are vital if we are to tackle the global problem of AMR. By working together we can reduce inappropriate use of antibiotics in people and animals and extend and safeguard the future of antibiotics for future generations.”*

**Professor Dilip Nathwani, OBE, BSAC President and Honorary Professor of Infection at the University of Dundee and Consultant Physician in NHS Tayside said:** *“The Society is committed to reducing antibiotic resistance by informing all audiences of the importance of tackling AMR by calling for all sectors to act now. These two statements represent the first in series of policy recommendations on antibiotic use, through which we aspire to educate and lever change at the highest clinical, governmental and public levels, supporting the global education provided by the Massive Open Online Course on Antimicrobial Stewardship <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/antimicrobial-stewardship>.”*

**President of the British Veterinary Association Sean Wensley said:** *“BVA welcomes BSAC’s focus on the use of antibiotics in animals and the sound principles conveyed in BSAC’s policy statement. Tackling the pressing issue of AMR is a top priority across the veterinary profession and the input of veterinary surgeons to the statement has provided another good example of inter-professional One Health working, which we fully support and encourage. The statement resonates with several areas of ongoing BVA activity to address AMR, for example the desire to identify and promote best practice to optimise animal welfare and minimise the need for therapeutic medication in livestock. There is much good veterinary-led work happening to achieve this, but we cannot be complacent and examples of best practice must continue to be used to motivate and facilitate ever-higher standards.”*

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## NOTES FOR EDITORS.

**Antimicrobial resistance** directly contributes to 23,000 deaths annually in the EU alone and is considered so important that in 2013 the World Economic Forum placed antimicrobial resistance on the global risk register alongside terrorism and global warming. In addition, there are very few new antibiotics in development. Although there are initiatives in place to regenerate antibacterial drug discovery, research and development it will be many years if not decades before these efforts bear results. It is essential therefore that the effectiveness of existing antibiotics is protected, one key measure being a reduction in overuse and inappropriate use.

The **British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy** (BSAC) is an inter-professional organization with over 40 years of experience and achievement in antibiotic education, research and leadership and is dedicated to saving lives through appropriate use and development of antibiotics now and in the future. BSAC publishes the Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy <http://jac.oxfordjournals.org>, the leading international journal in its field, and leads Antibiotic Action, a UK led global initiative that seeks to ensure effective antibiotics are researched, discovered and developed for all who need them. The Society engages with a wide range of stakeholders to improve and promote understanding of antimicrobials, including peer organizations, parliamentarians, policy-makers, students and healthcare trainees, scientists, researchers and journalists.

For further information on BSAC and its activities please visit BSAC [www.bsac.org.uk](http://www.bsac.org.uk) and

- Antibiotic Action [www.antibiotic-action.com](http://www.antibiotic-action.com)  
*Promoting the need for discovery and development of effective antibiotics for all who need them*
- APPG on Antibiotics <http://appg-on-antibiotics.com/>
- Antibiotic Resistance surveillance [www.bsacrsurv.org](http://www.bsacrsurv.org)  
*Monitoring resistance to antibiotics (antimicrobials, antibacterials) within the UK*
- National Antimicrobial Stewardship Point Prevalence System [www.nas-pps.com](http://www.nas-pps.com)  
*N3 server system providing reference data on antimicrobial consumption in hospital settings*
- National Susceptibility Testing Methodology [www.bsac.org.uk](http://www.bsac.org.uk)  
*Providing AST reporting and testing guidance since 1999*
- MOOC on Antimicrobial Stewardship <http://www.bsac.org.uk/massive-open-online-course-on-antimicrobial-stewardship/>

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## Policy Statement

### On the use of antibiotics in people

We recommend prevention of overuse of antibiotics in people to be achieved by:

- A global ban on the sale of antibiotics without a prescription and their direct marketing and selling to consumers via the internet.
- Improving access to essential antibiotics and vaccines for those living in resource-poor societies and for persons with a severe infection.
- Greater responsibility taken by governments, healthcare professions and organisations for the prescribing, dispensing and administration of antibiotics.
- Encouraging partnerships between national and local antibiotic stewardship (responsible use of antibiotics) and infection prevention teams so that the essential principles of antibiotic stewardship are implemented in every healthcare system across the world.
- Making antibiotic stewardship a mandatory item on every global, national and local agenda on patient safety and clinical governance.
- Measuring the impact of antibiotic resistance at global, national and local levels by implementing robust and integrated epidemiology, surveillance and benchmarking systems with appropriate metrics.
- Adopting a One Health approach and encouraging inter-disciplinary partnerships to share best practices between human and veterinary medicine, academia and industry.
- Improving antibiotic use by better employing existing diagnostic tests. We also support the development and use of accurate point-of-care tests including those that can detect antibiotic resistance.
- Educating everyone of all ages about hygiene, infection prevention and the care of common uncomplicated infections.
- Educating and training all current and future prescribers in the proper use of antibiotics.
- Funding for research to further explore the behavior influencing prescribers to minimise unnecessary antibiotic use. This should include research into the use of interactive prescribing and access to real time usage data.



## Policy Statement

### On the use of antibiotics in animals

We recommend prevention of overuse of antibiotics in all animals to be achieved by:

- A global ban on the use of all antibiotic growth promoters.
- Minimizing the prophylactic and metaphylactic use of antibiotics in all animals.
- Enhanced surveillance of animals for both animal and human infectious and commensal bacteria so as to provide an evidence base on resistance genes and their transmission within animal populations, and between animals and humans.
- Employing effective infection control measures to prevent dissemination of resistance genes between animals and humans, and within and between animal populations (e.g. farms, kennels etc).
- Increased research investment into animal husbandry and disease prevention in livestock and aquaculture systems.
- Fluoroquinolones, 3rd and 4th generation cephalosporins, and colistin only to be used in animals after showing a definite therapeutic need.
- Not using any new classes of antibiotic in animals; reserving them for human use only, unless they are found to only be safe in animals, not used in people and do not cause resistance to medicines used in people.
- Increased monitoring of animal husbandry practices through enhanced quality assurance schemes, and the promotion of best practice to optimise animal welfare and minimize the need for therapeutic medication in livestock.
- Food buyers, processors and retailers to promote evidence-based practice in animal welfare and the use of antibiotics in all parts of their supply chains. They should provide information on packaging to allow consumers to identify when antibiotics have been used in food production
- Enhance data collection on antibiotic prescribing by all veterinary practitioners and usage of antibiotics on every farm. Consider benchmarking of antibiotic use at the farm level and publishing benchmarking data on open-access websites.
- Funding for research into diagnostic techniques for bacterial infections in animals should be increased.
- Vaccination to become the primary means of preventing animal infectious diseases especially in agriculture and aquaculture. Increased funding is vital to facilitate research in to the development and delivery of new vaccines.