

Resistance to antibiotics requires commitment from world governments

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Half a year ago a first common step was taken toward global concerted action to combat resistance to antibiotics in bacteria. Ahead of World Health Day on April 7, the network ReAct, which is led from Uppsala University, Sweden, is urging the world to redouble its efforts. For the first time in many years, there are initiatives to start developing new drugs that have to be available when the old ones have completely stopped working.

The revolution that antibiotics entailed in [medical treatment](#) of common and uncommon infectious diseases is threatened by the fact that all over the world [bacteria](#) are rapidly developing resistance to these drugs. Such a scenario would return health care to an age when a [pneumonia](#) diagnosis was usually tantamount to a death sentence.

At a historic three-day meeting at Uppsala University in September last year, 190 delegates from 45 countries—representatives of volunteer organizations, academia, the drug industry, governments, authorities, and transnational organizations—agreed on a joint stance in the matter of resistance to antibiotics. In brief, the agreement entails that the world community for the first time declared antibiotics resistance a global problem, stating that new business models are needed to disconnect the development of drugs and diagnostics from their sale, that all unnecessary use must be curtailed, and that monitoring of the spread of resistance to antibiotics needs to improve.

The journal *Drug Resistance Updates* is devoting a theme issue in April

to the findings of the conference in Uppsala. Most of the articles are already available at www.drupjournal.com/inpress

Among the results of the conference, a national work group on [antibiotic resistance](#) has been formed in Ghana, and later this autumn a global forum on infectious diseases will be arranged for the first time in India. The issue of antibiotic resistance, focusing on creating new antibiotics, is being taken up at the EU level; ReAct is coordinating two seminars in Brussels with representatives of various players. A first seminar was given on March 29, with some 35 participants, and a full-day meeting is planned for May 23.

World Health Day 2011 is being devoted to the problem of resistance to antibiotics, and scientists in ReAct (Action on Antibiotic Resistance) are now urging world governments to take action. National interdisciplinary forums are needed for coordination and analysis and to move the issue forward.

"The question of resistance to [antibiotics](#) needs to be integrated into the national health systems. We also urge WHO and other health organizations to support this type of development. Our children and grandchildren run the risk of having to pay a high price unless the world decides to tackle the problem on a broad front," says Otto Cars, professor of [infectious diseases](#) at Uppsala University.

Provided by Uppsala University

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