

# Experts urge a defensive stance in efforts against antimicrobial resistance

September 8 2016

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In a Comment in *Nature*, CDDEP Director Ramanan Laxminarayan and other experts in antimicrobial resistance suggest that the United Nations should reframe global efforts against antimicrobial resistance by adopting a defensive stance. The suggested focus should be in building the resilience of society and maintaining diversity in the "global microbiome"—only a fraction of which causes human or animal disease.

Referring to the 2015 Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, a tripartite effort between the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the authors suggest, "it does not go far enough in recognizing the life support we receive from the global microbiome."

Investments in antimicrobial research and development have focused on creating drugs and diagnostics—innovations that mainly benefit wealthy nations' industries and populations. These antibiotics will ultimately lead to further resistance not only among pathogens but in all parts of the microbiome, including in animals and the environment. The authors suggest, "In any case, waging war on microbes is not tenable—our bodies and planet depend on them."

Key steps in the effort against antimicrobial resistance and worldwide lack of knowledge about it include widespread community education, engagement across nations and industries, formation of civil society coalitions, and recognition of the problem's urgency.

On September 21st, heads of state will meet for the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance, presenting an opportunity to coordinate global action to ensure a future where bacterial infections remain treatable and the global microbiome is respected.

According to Laxminarayan, "The UN meeting is the best opportunity there's ever been to set hard global targets and develop a structure to ensure accountability toward sustainable access to effective antimicrobials for the world's population."

Laxminarayan has previously authored comments related to the upcoming United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance.

A comment in *Science* established a target for the global reduction of antibiotic consumption and recommended an oversight mechanism:  
<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2016/08/17/science.aaf9286>

A comment in *The Lancet* calls on the UN General Assembly to establish a high-level coordinating mechanism to oversee transnational and multisectoral action against [antimicrobial resistance](#):  
[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)31079-0/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(16)31079-0/fulltext)

Provided by Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy

Citation: Experts urge a defensive stance in efforts against antimicrobial resistance (2016, September 8) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-09-experts-urge-defensive-stance-efforts.html>

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