

PRESS STATEMENT

On the 2nd International Day for Fighting Infection experts say both hospitals and the public need to be as vigilant as ever against infection

23 APRIL 2009: The medical and scientific community are marking the 2nd International Day for Fighting Infection on St. George's Day by drawing attention to the need for vigilance on infection control in Europe today.

The European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) says infection still holds the same importance in Europe today as it did in centuries past. The combination of booming international exchanges, emergence of novel pathogens, and resistance to therapy with common drugs means both the medical community and the public at large must beware the possibility of large-scale epidemics of unpredictable impact.

Infection in Europe today:

- There are an estimated 3-5 million influenza infections annually resulting in 250,000 and 500,000 deaths around the world
- Healthcare associated infections (HCAs) such as those sustained by MRSA are directly responsible for approximately 37,000 deaths annually and contribute to a further 110,000 across the EU
- HCAs result in an additional 16 million days of hospital stays per year with a total annual healthcare cost estimated at 5.5 billion for the EU
- Pneumonia is the largest single cause of deaths in children worldwide and causes two million deaths each year in under-fives
- In Europe hospitalisation rates for pneumonia have increased 20 per cent to 50 per cent over the past decade, with about ten to 15 per cent of those dying from the disease

ESCMID is joined by a number of other organizations in marking this day including the International Federation of Infection Control, the International Society of Chemotherapy (ISC), the International Society of Infectious Diseases (ISID) and 36 societies of Microbiology, Infectious Diseases and Chemotherapy from all over Europe. The Lancet Infectious Diseases also supports the initiative.

The European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases is a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of infection-related diseases. This is achieved by promoting and supporting research, education, training, and good medical practice.

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