

Voluntary organisations help create global shield against antibiotic resistance

CHICAGO, 18 September 2011: Antimicrobial resistance is one of the top three global health threats to mankind. To spur global action, the Alliance for Prudent Use of Antibiotics (APUA) is today presenting the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) and its President, Professor Giuseppe Cornaglia, with its 2011 Leadership Award at its 30th anniversary reception at the International Congress for Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy (ICAAC). The award recognises ESCMID's sustained leadership in establishing expert study groups and building antibiotic resistance awareness and surveillance programmes through new partnerships and scientific projects, many involving local APUA chapters in Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Venezuela, Argentina and other countries.

“Antimicrobial resistance is casting an ever-growing shadow over the public health community,” said Professor Cornaglia. “Last year, drug-resistant bacterial infections killed an estimated 25,000 people in Europe alone.” In the US, resistant infections cost the healthcare system over \$20 billion dollars annually and added more than 8 million extra hospital days each year, according to a recent APUA sponsored study, notes Dr Stuart Levy, APUA President and Professor at Tufts University School of Medicine.

In presenting the award Dr Levy said, “The influence of its transnational initiatives clearly demonstrates ESCMID's leadership and catalysing force for the local chapters of APUA in Europe. Professor Giuseppe Cornaglia has provided vision and commitment to strengthen these efforts over a number of years”.

According to Dr Levy, “The lack of binding global governmental authority requires expansion of local and regional voluntary efforts to contain antibiotic resistance and complement governmental programmes”. As an example of local action in resource poor countries, APUA is presenting its country chapter leadership award to APUA Nepal and its President, Dr. Kumud. K. Kafle for establishing multi-hospital surveillance programmes and national antibiotic guidelines. APUA-Nepal is one of 67 country chapters in the APUA global network which extends to over 33 resource- poor countries.

Also today at ICAAC APUA will hold a symposium entitled *Novel Approaches to the Containment of Antibiotic Resistance in Industrial and Developing Countries*. “By promoting improved diagnostics and antibiotic stewardship, we can simultaneously improve antibiotic treatment and minimise the selective pressure which drives global resistance,” said APUA Executive Director, Kathy Young.

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ESCMID: The European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) is a non-profit organisation 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 www.escmid.org

APUA : The Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics (APUA) has been the leading global non-governmental organisation working to improve antibiotic access and preserve their effectiveness since 1981. With a network of affiliated chapters in 67 countries, more than 33 of which are in the developing world, APUA's goal is to improve antimicrobial policy and clinical practice so as to preserve the power of these lifesaving agents and improve patient treatment. www.apua.org