European Antibiotic Awareness Day: ESCMID experts promote prudent use of antibiotics to fight resistance

18 November 2016, Basel: Experts at the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Disease (ESCMID) are joining colleagues across the globe this week to promote prudent use of antibiotics. They show their support for the European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD) on 18 November, which was inaugurated in 2006 to raise awareness of antimicrobial resistance. EAAD forms part of World Antibiotic Awareness week from 14 – 20 November, which reflects the fact that the war against antimicrobial resistance must be a global effort. Some of the society’s activities throughout this week and since its foundation more than 30 years ago are highlighted on its dedicated Fighting Resistance webpage.

On 18 November ESCMID is organizing a number of activities to promote prudent use of antibiotics in Europe. These include events at healthcare institutions and public campaigns on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), surveillance and antibiotic stewardship programmes in Moldova, Turkey, Spain, Cyprus and the Netherlands.

Prof. Jesús Rodríguez-Baño, ESCMID President-elect and Secretary General: “Antimicrobial resistance is a global threat that has been at the core of ESCMID’s activities – at our study groups, committees, courses and conferences over the past years. Our experts have been committed to developing hands-on solutions by supporting and promoting research and training to tackle the problem around the world. The society offers professional training and programmes on antimicrobial stewardship, infection control and surveillance resistance. It develops medical guidelines, policies for antimicrobial use, and initiatives to promote novel diagnostics, vaccines and therapies.”

The society has undertaken a number of initiatives to effectively fight the growing problem. Only in September ESCMID together with the American Society for Microbiology organized an international conference on drug development to meet the AMR challenge (view key presentations here). Drawing from the outcomes of the conference ESCMID plans to publish a position paper on its strategy and role in the fight against AMR.

AMR will once again be one of the main topics at ECCMID, the world’s largest congress in infectious diseases and clinical microbiology usually gathering some 12,000 specialists, from 22 – 25 April 2017 in Vienna. A book on antimicrobial stewardship produced by ESCMID and ESCMID Study Group for Antibiotic Policies (ESGAP) is due for publication in April 2017. The book has been developed by key experts in the field as a practical ‘hands-on’ book to help antimicrobial stewardship team members design and implement their programme, in all healthcare settings. It can also be used as an undergraduate and postgraduate training tool for infectious diseases specialists, microbiologists, pharmacists, nurses, and any other professionals involved in antimicrobial stewardship.

ESCMID has been supporting governments and international organizations to develop and implement policies on evidence-based prevention, infection control, surveillance of resistance, antimicrobial stewardship and sanitation to guarantee an optimal use of antimicrobial medicines. The society welcomes the fact that the topic moved to the top of the global agenda in September when the United Nations General Assembly called a high-level meeting to address a problem that is projected to cause up to 10 million annual deaths by 2050.

Concrete efforts of ESCMID over the past years include the European Committee on Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (EUCAST), jointly organized by ESCMID and the ECDC, which defines so-called breakpoints required to define optimal dosing of antibiotics and thus distinguish between therapeutic success and failure. Recently EUCAST completed a review of breakpoints or fluoroquinolone and carbapenem, two of the most important groups of antibiotics, and defined breakpoints and susceptibility methods for new agents and additional bacterial species. Its experts also conducted a study that showed that phenotypic antimicrobial susceptibility testing (PAST) is a better predictor of susceptibility, while whole genome sequencing (WGS) is more useful for characterizing resistance genes and mechanisms.

One of the more recent initiatives include European Committee on Infection Control (EUCIC), which was created in 2014 to support the implementation of infection control and preventive (ICPM) measures to reduce the burden
of healthcare-associated infections. Among many ongoing projects, EUCIC is currently involved in the PERCEPT-R project, which aims to investigate the perceptions of infection control specialists regarding AMR and infection prevention and control in different countries, and the role played by the cultural, contextual and behavioural aspect on the prevention of AMR. In order to contribute to the harmonisation of ICPM and standardisation of procedures, EUCIC is working on developing new educational tools that could provide a new generation of infection control specialists with a global European perspective and competence. Increasing burden of infectious diseases, epidemiology as well as demographic changes and mass migration are overwhelming facts that no nation alone will be able to overcome.

EUCIC together with major stakeholders and the national representatives in the EUCIC advisory board is currently developing a European training programme for infection control in healthcare settings.

**AMR will continue to be a focus for ESCMID education**

ESCMID has offered courses relevant to antimicrobial stewardship and drug-resistant infections this year, including:

- 18-19 January (Cape Town, South Africa): Diagnosis and management of drug-resistant TB. See the presentations [here](#).
- 7-8 April (Ijmuiden Aan Zee, Netherlands): Antimicrobial stewardship. See the presentations [here](#).
- 29 May - 1 June 2016 (Groningen, Netherlands): Infection Prevention and Control: Let's Get Practical!, ESCMID Postgraduate Technical Workshop. See the presentations [here](#).
- 20-23 September (Bochum, Germany): Antimicrobial susceptibility testing and surveillance from laboratory to clinic. See the presentations [here](#).

Further courses are planned for the coming 12 months, including:

- Hospital-Acquired Infections: Understanding the Magnitude and Needed Interventions, 23 – 24 March in Muscat, Oman
- Antimicrobial Resistance Across Europe and the Far East: Issues and Solutions, 26-27 May 2017, Taipei, Taiwan
- Advanced Technical Workshop: Infection and Resistance Prevention in the Regional Healthcare Network, 31 May – 1 June 2017, Groningen, Netherlands
- Emerging Antibiotic Resistance in Gram-Negative Bacteria: Problems and Solutions, 14 -15 September 2017, Fribourg, Switzerland
- Antimicrobial Stewardship: Principles and Practice, 4 - 6 October 2017, Istanbul, Turkey

-ENDS-

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**ESCMID** is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases in Europe and beyond. The society promotes and supports research, education and training and shares good medical practice in the infection disciplines to build capacity throughout the world. [www.escmid.org](http://www.escmid.org).

ESCMID organizations active in the fight against antimicrobial resistance include EUCAST, the European Committee on Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing, EUCIC, the European Committee on Infection Control, and ESGAP, the ESCMID Study Group for Antibiotic Policies.