

AMR NEWSLETTER

Implementation of the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Pakistan makes progress in infection prevention and control programming

Since April 2018 Pakistan has made significant progress in its establishment of an effective national infection prevention and control (IPC) programme.

It has issued decrees establishing a national IPC unit with an IPC focal point, and a steering committee to oversee the standardization and implementation of IPC policies, provide technical guidance and monitor IPC activities.

IPC guidelines and standards are being developed by a guideline development group representing all stakeholders.

A training programme is being launched for hospital IPC teams. The WHO collaborating centre in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, will be training IPC teams from selected hospitals in February 2019.



Contact us

Please inform us of upcoming events and activities to include in future issues of this newsletter. We are happy to receive your feedback and comments at emrgAMR@who.int.

Highlights of World Antibiotic Week 2018



Dr Rana Hajjeh, Director, Department of Communicable Diseases Control and Prevention in the WHO Regional Office, addresses the press

More countries than ever before participated in World Antibiotic Awareness Week 2018.

With 18 of the 22 countries in the Region marking the week, activities varied from meetings with policy-makers and training workshops with students to large public gatherings. Countries developed printed materials, songs, poems and other content to address antibiotic use. Several countries organized activities across large geographical areas during the course of the week, many of which received significant media attention.

Increasing awareness of AMR among all segments of society is one of the strategic objectives of the Global Action Plan. Tackling antimicrobial resistance is one of the five platforms of WHO's Thirteenth General Programme of Work to ensure that people enjoy better health and well-being. Raising the public's awareness of AMR will help to contribute to achievement of universal health coverage. AMR currently accounts for an estimated 700 000 deaths per year and by 2030 will represent up to US\$ 3.4 trillion in gross domestic product loss.

Media encouraged to raise awareness of AMR



Experts discuss the problem of AMR at the press conference

On 12 November 2018, WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FOA) provided regional updates on the implementation of the Global Action Plan on AMR under the 'One Health' approach. During the media event 14 journalists from different media outlets received awards recognising their contributions to raising awareness of AMR in 2017, and winners of the youth-focused 'Video for change' smart phone initiative were announced.

TV and radio programmes and online and print journals reported the event.

Over 14 000 pledge to become WHO heroes

Congratulations to the more than 14 000 participants in the WHO regional online challenge who pledged to become WHO AMR heroes.

The largest number of participants were from Sudan (4071), followed by Oman (3774) and Saudi Arabia (1824).

Great results were also seen in Palestine (751), Libya (737), Egypt (590), Jordan (462) and Qatar (362).

Raising public awareness has greatly contributed to the public's understanding of the problem of AMR.



Using technology to combat AMR: ‘Video for change’, a new behaviour change initiative

Egypt, Sudan and Jordan are participating in the ‘Video for change’ initiative, which encourages young people to use technology to become advocates for behavioural change to combat AMR.

Over 100 medical, pharmacy and veterinary students joined a 2-day training course conducted by a health communication expert. The course included sessions on using smart phones to shoot and edit videos and techniques to enhance and merge video clips.

The training was followed by a competition for the best video clip. Over 30 clips were submitted to a selection committee of multi-disciplinary experts on antimicrobial resistance, communication and behaviour change. Three videos from each country received prizes and the names of the winners were announced during the World Antibiotic Awareness Week 2018 press conference at the WHO Regional Office. All participants were encouraged to circulate their videos clips as widely as possible through social networks.

Sudan promoted the ‘One Health’ concept, in collaboration with the Ministry of Animal Resources and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The vast majority of students said that they acquired new technical skills after taking part in the initiative and were willing to change their own behaviour and advocate for others to do so after developing an understanding of AMR.

“I knew about antimicrobial resistance. I am a doctor but I never realised how serious the problem was until I joined the Video for Change initiative”. Mahmoud Shafik, Egypt.

“I will continue being an advocate for AMR”. Mohamed Ghonim, Egypt.

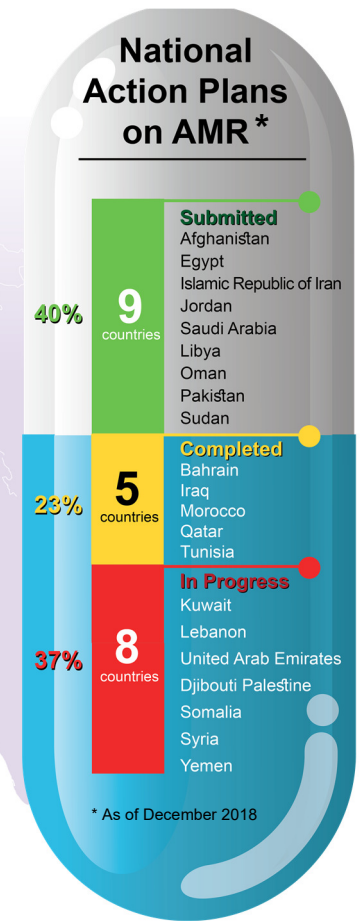
The Video for Change initiative will be expanded and scaled up, incorporating lessons learned from the pilot.



As part of the ‘Video for change’ initiative, training was conducted in Egypt and Jordan

Regional update on national action plans

Since July 2018, four additional countries (Egypt, Jordan, Libya and Sudan) have submitted national action plans to WHO. An additional five countries have completed their plans and are awaiting government approval.



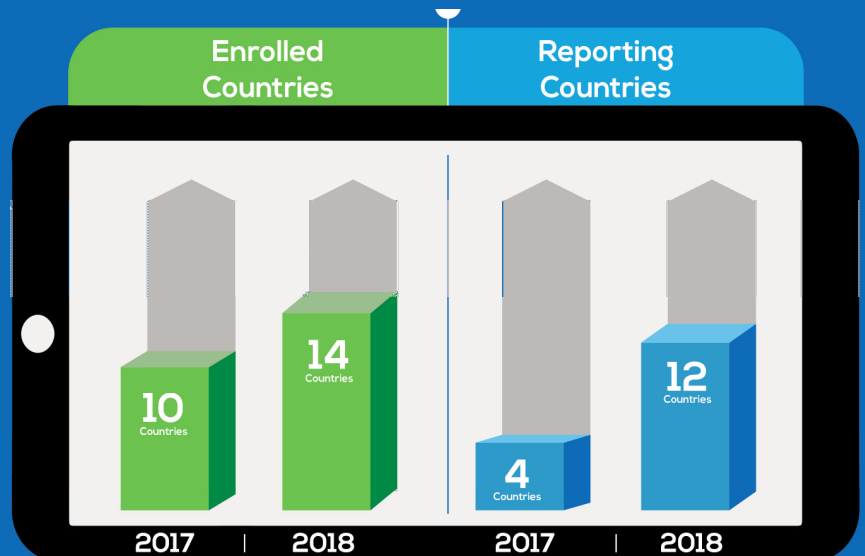
National action plans are available at:

www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/national-action-plans/library/en/

Global antimicrobial resistance surveillance system (GLASS) updates

The number of countries reporting data to GLASS is increasing, from four countries in 2017 to 12 in 2018.

The number of countries enrolled in GLASS increased from 10 countries in 2017 to 14 in 2018.



Read more about GLASS:
www.who.int/glass/en

(GLASS) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Jordan greatly enhances AMR response

Since 2017 the Ministry of Health in Jordan, with support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), has been working with national and international stakeholders to increase their capacity to implement national AMR action plans to monitor, prevent, and reduce infections caused by AMR. The primary focus of the KOICA funds is to enhance national AMR surveillance systems to generate evidence-based data on AMR to be used for implementing tailored prevention strategies and measure the impact of these interventions.

Within a short period Jordan has established the necessary organizational structures to carry out this important work, including creating a multisectoral AMR committee that oversees implementation of the national action plan.

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with national stakeholders and international partners, developed a national AMR surveillance plan and has taken serious steps to join the WHO GLASS surveillance network, aligning its infrastructure to meet GLASS requirements. This included assigning a national AMR reference laboratory, 8 sentinel AMR surveillance sites, and a national coordination centre that manages 'one health' integrated AMR surveillance in Jordan.

Various capacity-building activities targeted the AMR surveillance teams in Jordan, including training on WHONET, AMR surveillance concepts, data collection and reporting. Standardization of laboratory operating procedures for identification of pathogens, antimicrobial susceptibility testing and quality control is implemented by the laboratory network in Jordan.

In December 2018, the Ministry of Health led the implementation of a point prevalence survey on antibiotic use in 7 hospitals using the standardized WHO protocol. The survey will provide important data used in the design of antibiotic stewardship programmes.

The initial implementation of AMR activities in Jordan has been impressive, and more activities are expected. We congratulate the Ministry of Health and national stakeholders for this great achievement.



Upcoming events

Event	Date	Place
Training workshop on the global antimicrobial resistance surveillance system (GLASS) and WHONET software for GLASS-enrolled countries	14–17 January 2019	Tunis, Tunisia
Sub-regional training workshop to support countries to establish a national antimicrobial resistance surveillance plan	28–29 January 2019	Casablanca, Morocco
Training on the laboratory quality management system for GLASS-enrolled countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region	10–14 February 2019	Cairo, Egypt
Expert consultation on best practices for health care-associated infection surveillance programmes in low- and middle-income countries	20–21 February 2019	Cairo, Egypt