

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE AND ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

There are critical gaps in household level coverage of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.



222 million

lack access to basic hygiene services*



78 million

lack access to safely managed drinking-water



138 million

lack access to safely managed sanitation

*or there is insufficient data on access to basic hygiene services.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WASH INTERVENTIONS IN PREVENTING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR)

Improvements in WASH and wastewater management in all sectors are critical elements of preventing infections and reducing the spread of AMR.

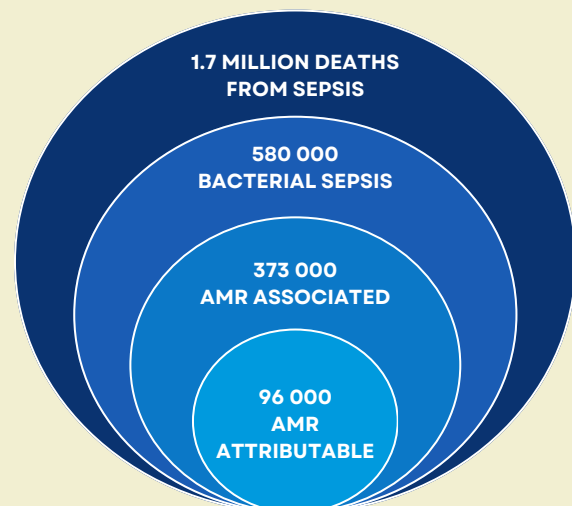
Antimicrobial resistant organisms and their genes and antimicrobial compounds and their metabolites are common and widespread contaminants of wastewater and sludge from humans, animal and plant production, and antimicrobial manufacturing. Ensuring universal access to WASH in households, health facilities and schools plays a significant role in preventing the spread of all types of infections, including resistant pathogens, and will decrease the overall demand for antibiotic use, misuse and waste, and reduce the opportunity for resistant strains to emerge.

DRUG RESISTANCE IS INCREASING IN THE WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

In 2021, there were **1.7 million deaths** from sepsis in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Of these **373 000** were associated with bacterial AMR.

The Eastern Mediterranean Region consumes more antibiotics than any other WHO region.

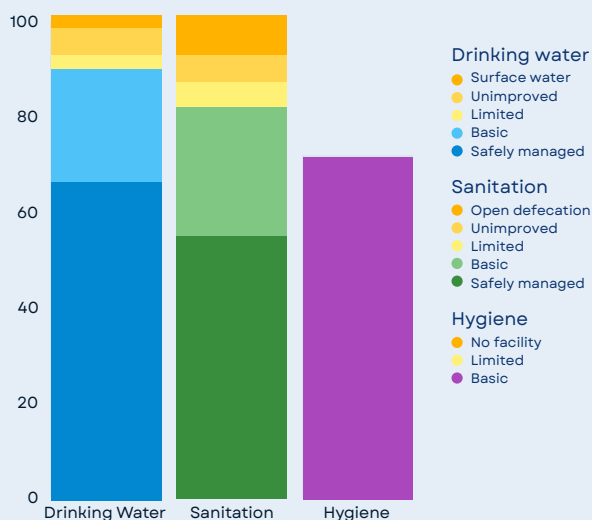
In 2018, the Eastern Mediterranean Region consumed antibiotics at a higher rate per capita (21.8 defined daily doses per 1000 inhabitants per day) than the global average (14.3) and than any other WHO region. Consumption is greatest in high-income countries, while middle-income countries reported the greatest increase in consumption between 2000 and 2018.



Burden of sepsis and bacterial AMR in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2021

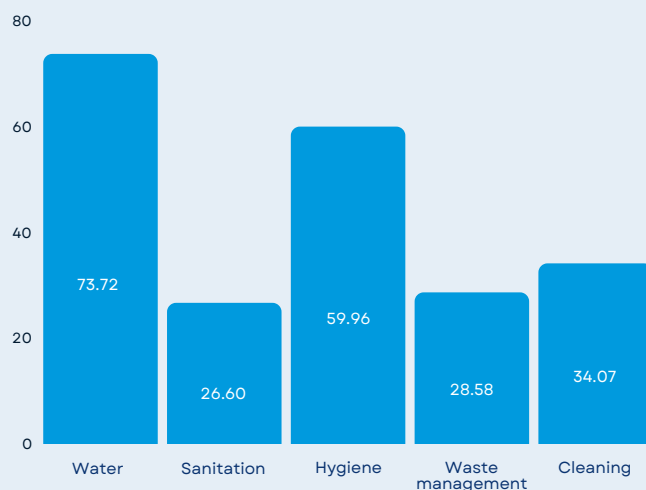
Source: Based on data from: GBD 2021 Antimicrobial Resistance Collaborators. Global burden of bacterial antimicrobial resistance 1990–2021: a systematic analysis with forecasts to 2050. Lancet. 2024 Sep 28;404(10459):1199–226.

Eastern Mediterranean Region WASH coverage (%) at national level, by population, 2022



Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (<https://washdata.org/data/household#!/dashboard/6096>).

Eastern Mediterranean Region basic WASH services in health care facilities (%) at national level, 2023



Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (<https://washdata.org/data/healthcare#!/dashboard/6292>).

CHALLENGES IN EXPANDING WASH COVERAGE IN THE REGION

- Effective coordination among stakeholders
- Inadequate political attention and prioritization
- Non-availability of data
- Inadequate investment in the WASH sector
- Inadequate monitoring and reporting
- Loss of and damage to WASH systems due to climate change, emergencies and conflicts

MEASURES TO INCREASE WASH COVERAGE IN THE REGION

Monitoring and reporting on WASH services to raise awareness can help increase investment in WASH services. Significant and sustainable AMR risk reduction, however, requires **longer-term WASH system changes** that promote safely managed WASH services.

- Monitoring & reporting on WASH services**
- Awareness raising**
- Increased investment in WASH services**

There is a need to develop **health-protective WASH regulations and standards**, using public health surveillance data to target WASH investments in high disease-burden areas and prevent outbreaks, and ensure WASH services in health care facilities for patients, staff and carers as an effective infection, prevention and control measure. Such an approach requires engagement across sectors including water, sanitation, health, environment and agriculture.

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