

## Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare-associated Infections Programme

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The programme on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare-Associated Infections (ARHAI) covers two major public health issues:

- **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**, i.e. the ability of microorganisms to become resistant to one or several antimicrobial agents used for therapy or prophylaxis;
- **Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI)**, i.e. all infections associated with patient care, in particular hospitals and long-term care facilities.

The ARHAI programme focuses on 4 areas of public health: surveillance, response and scientific advice, training and communication to address the threat of antimicrobial resistance and healthcare-associated infections.

### Background

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and healthcare-associated infections (HAI) are among the most serious public health problems, globally and in Europe. ECDC estimated that approximately 4 million patients acquire a HAI each year in all EU Member States and that approximately 37,000 deaths directly result from these infections. A large proportion of these deaths are due to the most common multidrug-resistant bacteria, i.e. *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Enterobacteriaceae*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* for which the number of directly attributable deaths is currently estimated at 25,000. The issues of AMR and HAI overlap widely, but are not synonymous. HAI are often due to antibiotic-resistant bacteria, but not always. Inversely, antibiotic-resistant bacteria, including multidrug resistant types, are not only responsible for HAI but are also responsible for infections in outpatients and found as part of the flora of healthy individuals, in pet animals and in the environment. They are also isolated from food-producing animals and sometimes from food products.

In November 2001, the EU Health Ministers adopted the [Council Recommendation on the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in human medicine \(2002/77/EC\)](#). In June 2009 they adopted the [Council Recommendation on patient safety, including the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections \(2009/C 151/01\)](#). These Recommendations ask Member States to adopt and implement specific strategies for the prudent use of antimicrobial agents - aiming at containing antimicrobial resistance, and for the prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections - aiming at improving patient safety.

### RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

#### ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR)

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - Action plan against the rising threats from Antimicrobial Resistance  
European commission's 5-year Action Plan to better tackle the growing health problem of antimicrobial resistance (AMR): the plan proposes 12 concrete actions  
Second report from the Commission to the Council (09/04/2010)  
Report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation (2002/77/EC) on the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in human medicine  
Detailed analysis of countries reports (09/04/2010)  
Accompanying the 2nd report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation (2002/77/EC) on the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in human medicine  
First report from the Commission to the Council (22/12/2005)  
Report from the Commission to the Council on the basis of Member States' reports on the implementation of the Council Recommendation (2002/77/EC) on the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in human medicine  
Council Recommendation of 15 November 2001 (2002/77/EC) on the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in human medicine  
Communication from the Commission on a Community Strategy against antimicrobial resistance (20/06/2001)

#### HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS (HAI)

Council Recommendation on patient safety, including prevention and control of healthcare associated infections (09/06/2009)

### EUROBAROMETER SURVEYS

Antimicrobial resistance (09/04/2010)  
Patient safety and quality of healthcare (16/04/2010)