

Current Health Event

Antimicrobial resistance

February 26, Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Lebanon has been recognized as a serious problem at the senior level in the Ministry of Public Health. The problem of antibiotic misuse has several aspects and thus needs a multifaceted approach.

Editorial note:

Improving the use of medicines by health workers and the general public is crucial both in reducing morbidity and mortality from communicable and non-communicable diseases, and containing drug expenditure.

Ideally, therapeutically sound and cost-effective use of medicines by health professionals and consumers should be achieved at all levels of the health system, and in both the public and the private sectors.

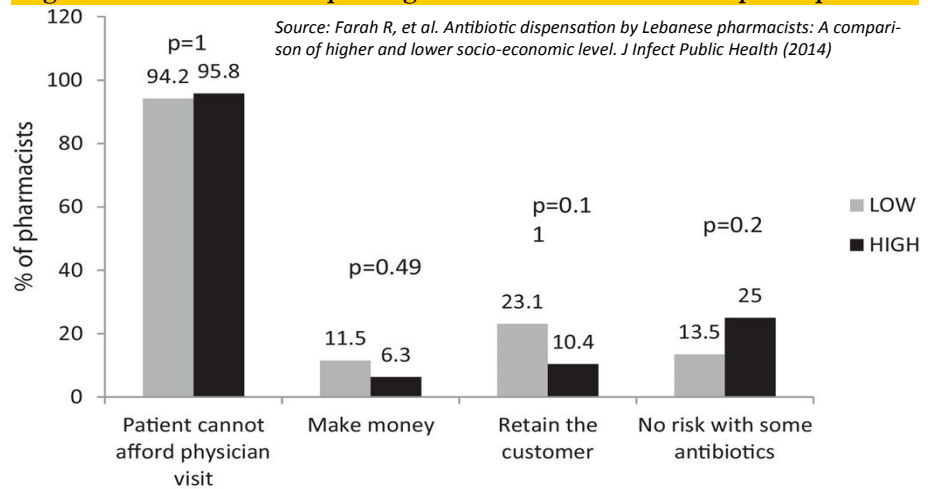
In Lebanon, practices that increase the risk of AMR are observed including: inappropriate use of antimicrobials, often in inadequate dosage for non – bacterial infections; over –use of injections when oral formulations would be more appropriate; failure to prescribe in accordance with clinical guidelines; inappropriate self-medication, often of prescription-only medicines; non- adherence to dosing regimen.

The laws and regulations for dispensing prescription-only drugs are available but need to be enforced.

The system for communicable disease surveillance is in place and with some adjustments will be fully functional covering the Antimicrobial Resistance as well.

The MoPH has a standing Infectious Disease Committee to support key related strategies and decisions.

Figure: Reasons behind dispensing antibiotics without medical prescription.



Source: Farah R, et al. Antibiotic dispensation by Lebanese pharmacists: A comparison of higher and lower socio-economic level. *J Infect Public Health* (2014)

Gray and black bars represent respectively pharmacists working in lower and higher socio-economic areas.

A task force for AMR prevention and monitoring is established at the MoPH and works on a program with 3 pillars supported by WHO:

- Awareness raising through media targeting mainly users.
- Training on rational use of drugs, targeting mainly health professionals.
- Establishment of an AMR surveillance- hospital and laboratory based, to serve as an observatory at national level.

WHO's 2014 report on global surveillance of antimicrobial resistance reveals that antibiotic resistance is no longer a prediction for the future; it is happening right now, across the world, and is putting at risk the ability to treat common infections in the community and hospitals.

Without urgent, coordinated action, the world is heading towards a post-antibiotic era, in which common infections and minor injuries, can once again kill. AMR is an increasingly serious threat to global public health that requires action across all government sectors and society.

Cumulative Notifiable diseases in Lebanon (Syrian)				
Disease	2014 Cumul	2015 Cumul*	Jan	Feb
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Polio	0(0)	0	0(0)	0(0)
Acute Flaccid Paralysis	53(16)	4	4	0(0)
Measles	235(107)	1	1	0(0)
Mumps	736(117)	193	190	3
Pertussis	87(25)	2	2	0(0)
Rabies	1(0)	0	0(0)	0(0)
Rubella	18(12)	1	1	0(0)
Tetanus	0(0)	0	0(0)	0(0)
Viral Hep B	218(33)	6	5	1
Water/Food Borne Diseases				
Brucellosis	252(36)	5	5	0(0)
Cholera	0(0)	0	0(0)	0(0)
Hydatid cyst	16(2)	2	2	0(0)
Typhoid Fever	546(33)	12	12	0(0)
Viral Hep A	2582 (911)	115	111	4
Other Diseases				
Leishmaniasis	663(638)	1	1	0(0)
Meningitis	232(35)	27	27	0(0)
Viral Hep C	100(6)	6	6	0(0)

Source: Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon as on 06/02/2015