Webinar: Antimicrobial Resistance – a silent pandemic

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is a slow, silent, but deadly pandemic. AMR arises from an indiscriminate use of antimicrobials (antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals and antiparasitics), to which bacteria and other microbes develop resistances, making these products ineffective. **Resistant bacteria, or superbugs, can be transmitted from and to humans and animals. They can also spread into the environment and water system** (e.g. through crops) **via different entry points**, such as antibiotics in human and animal medicine, poor hygiene, overuse in livestock production for growth promotion, **and through various vectors** (contaminated water, soil and food). Cases of AMR have increased globally, along with a growing risk that bacterial infections in human and animal health will be very difficult – if not impossible – to treat. As such, **integrated and coordinated actions across sectors**, that include all the relevant stakeholders, are paramount in the fight against AMR.

On April 30, the **SDC Health, A+FS and Water Networks** co-organised a **learning event on antimicrobial resistance**, with the objectives of raising awareness on AMR and invite SDC colleagues to think about opportunities for interventions and highlight efforts that have already been taken so far.

From a **human health** perspective, Olivier Praz, SDC Health Focal Point, presented the SDC-funded **diagnostics for febrile children illnesses** developed by FIND that allow to better target antibiotic-based treatments, thereby preventing misuse of drugs. In a **livelihood and health** perspective, Lensse Gobu Bonga, programme manager at the Swiss Embassy in Ethiopia presented two One Health projects (JOHI and HEAL) that are currently running in the Horn of Africa. She highlighted the importance of **animal-human interactions in pastoralist communities**, to whom **One Health Units** (OHUs) provide integrated medical and veterinary services, with potential for raising awareness on antimicrobial use, including contraband drugs, and monitoring AMR. Finally, two colleagues presented current efforts in **waste water management**. Stuart Wallis, programme manager and health focal point at Humanitarian Aid, presented recent developments to monitor bacteria in emergency settings with the Faecal Sludge Field Laboratory, for which monitoring could be extended to resistant bacteria strains with great scale-up opportunities. Finally, SDC co-created and supports **RAMP**, the Responsible Antibiotic Manufacturing Platform, to address the **release of antibiotics in waste water during the production process** in partnership between procurers, regulators and companies. Sakshi Dasgupta, from the Swiss Embassy in India, gave an overview of RAMP and the Indian context, one of the main antibiotic manufacturing hubs in the world. This last example is the **most direct SDC intervention in the fight against AMR**.

Given the broad health, economic and environmental implications, AMR is undoubtedly a problem that needs to be urgently tackled. This, in turn, **requires political will and multi-sectorial strategy at the national level**. As a good practice example, Corinne Corradi, currently programme manager with the Global Programme Health, presented **the Swiss national**

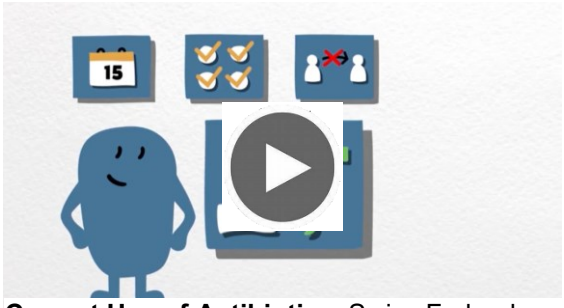
Strategy on Antibiotic Resistance (StAR) and highlighted the **collaborative efforts** of the Federal Offices of Health, Agriculture, Veterinary and Environment in setting up and framing StAR in a **One Health perspective**. Early on, stakeholders from various areas were included in the process, which led to **general acceptance of shared responsibility** and **voluntary compliance**.

While this webinar highlighted the urgency to address AMR from a multi-sectorial approach, as well as opportunities for further interventions, it should however not be forgotten that access to safe, effective and affordable antibiotics in LMICs remains a health challenge.

AMR explained under 5min:

Antimicrobial Resistance – African Region, AU, FAO, OIE, WHO, and UNEP

(Video in English)



Correct Use of Antibiotics, Swiss Federal Office of Public Health

Video and further information available in EN | FR | DE | IT | ES | PT | and other languages