

Press release

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EPH Conference calls for better communication between scientist and politicians to stop the spread of (resistant) pathogens

Our globalised environment, supports the unprecedented spread of pathogens. Novel threats include emerging pathogens, some of which are resistant to antiviral drugs or antibiotics.

Prompt identification for subsequent management of these outbreaks is essential. Initiatives to support sharing of diagnostic reagents, strains and sequences in a timely manner will enable the scientific community to advance its understanding more efficiently. The success of these efforts lies within the scientific community and is dependent on the willingness of scientists to contribute with their tools and data.

Another essential issue the scientific community must address is advocacy and communication with stakeholders and engagement of the general public to raise awareness about these global threats.

Advocacy and communication between scientists and politicians are perhaps the most critical links in the communication chain if operational change is to be achieved. Politicians and scientists do not speak the same language as they do not base their decisions on the same datasets, and this causes a misalignment of priorities and loss of focus. Politicians' decisions are influenced by newspaper headlines, the interests of their constituencies, citizen's protests and lobbying by special interest groups. Thus, a disease outbreak with the potential to become a major health issue, which is well managed and does not evolve into a troublesome public health event, is generally perceived by the media as a hoax or the result of a conspiracy between scientists and multinational pharma.

It would be beneficial for the scientific community to focus on systematic communication efforts with the political environment, including the rejection of conspiracy theory or hoax accusations. Doing so would bring added value and would enable the medical research community to improve the outcome of their efforts, with positive consequences for public health as a whole.

Take home messages:

- Message 1: Use simple take home messages for politicians
- Message 2: Stop thinking that the scientific community does not need to interact with politicians.

Furthermore immediate action is needed for the control of AMR. EUPHA Section Infectious disease control therefore embraces the WHO global action plan with 5 strategic areas of intervention:

1. improve awareness and understanding of antimicrobial resistance;
2. strengthen knowledge through surveillance and research;



3. reduce the incidence of infection;
4. optimize the use of antimicrobial agents;
5. develop the economic case for sustainable investment that takes account of the needs of all countries, and increase investment in new medicines, diagnostic tools, vaccines and other interventions.

Lastly we embrace the One HEALTH concept for antibiotic resistance by working together with the veterinary sector in reducing the use of antibiotics in animals.

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About EPH Conference

The EPH Conference aims to contribute to the improvement of public health in Europe by offering the means to exchange information and a platform for debate to researchers, policymakers, practitioners, young professionals and students in the field of public health, health services research and public health training and education.

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