



Aiming in the Dark: What Happens when Disease Spreads Without Diagnosis

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a complex challenge - it is not a single pathogen like COVID-19; it can and does spread silently across healthcare, community and the environment; and it's unlikely to be prevented with vaccines alone. As we've seen with the COVID-19 pandemic, however, **diagnostics are critical to slowing the spread of AMR**. Better diagnostics can guide faster, more appropriate treatment to ensure patients receive the right drug for their infection, at the right time, for the right duration. Diagnostics can help us to preserve antibiotics and ensure they remain effective when they are needed most.

Dedicated funding and strong market need can and have driven **rapid innovation**. As we've seen, COVID-19 diagnostic tests were developed within weeks of the outbreak along with public health capabilities to address the

pandemic like digital data collection, local manufacturing, and global distribution. There have been platforms built to collate data, resources marshaled, and creativity unleashed. We should capitalize on this innovation for AMR, across the board, but certainly to continue to move diagnostics for antibiotic-resistant pathogens forward.

COVID-19 has really shown the importance of having a diagnostic test and capacity across countries and all levels of the health system. We can, and we must, learn from and expand these new forms of **collaboration** and **partnerships** to combat AMR.



As stated by the moderator,
Manica Balasegaram:

“Health system strengthening is critical. We need to make the link between a strong health system and diagnostic capacity, this resolves the issue of drugs versus diagnostics. I’ve seen that dynamic having worked in countries across the world and especially in fragile health systems.”

These key takeaways were shared by leading global experts on November 5, 2020 as part of the *AMR in the Light of COVID-19* webinar series.

Links to Resources:



**Second WHO Model
List of Essential In
Vitro Diagnostics**



**Free, online
course: Role of
diagnostics in the
AMR response**



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Plan for Combating
Antibiotic-Resistant
Bacteria
(National Action Plan)**