



An Overview: Prevention is Stronger Than a Cure

Infection Prevention and Control

Our fight against antimicrobial resistance, or AMR, must start with preventing infections. No infection means no antibiotics are needed. Fewer antibiotics means antibiotic resistance slows. Less antibiotic resistance means lives saved.

AMR is a complicated puzzle. Antibiotic stewardship and development of diagnostics and new drugs are critical pieces, but a key piece that is often overlooked is **preventing infections before they start**. We've seen the value of infection prevention play out with the COVID-19 pandemic. Now it's our responsibility to put prevention first at all levels—on the frontlines with clinicians and practitioners in the field all the way up to our decision makers.

Without **infection prevention and control**, the AMR puzzle will always be incomplete. We need **a hierarchy of infection control efforts** to reduce the risk of AMR, with the first large layer being **engineering controls** (the steps we take within our environment to separate people and pathogens to remove or reduce the hazard), which have come into very sharp focus with COVID-19. The

second layer is **administrative controls** within healthcare systems (the policies and procedures that prevent pathogen exposure), and the final part of the pyramid are the **individual controls**, or the personal protective equipment and handwashing, which generally protects the self as well as those around you.

We also want to ensure **proper hygiene that will lead to a reduction in preventable infections**, that will thereby prevent the use of antibiotics, which would lessen the AMR burden. When we think about the holistic work for AMR, you can't neglect WASH (Water, sanitation, and hygiene), it's a critical component.

Finally, **vaccines can play a role in addressing AMR** in two key ways - reducing the incidence of infections due to bacterial pathogens, including those resistant to antibiotics and reducing the need for antibiotic use overall.



As stated by the moderator,
Andrew Morris:

With infection prevention and control, which is a complex collection of fields, that borrows on the greatest traditions of Florence Nightingale, John Snow and others, reducing infections will reduce the need for antibiotics, and therefore reduce the selection pressure for antimicrobial resistant infections.

These key takeaways were shared by leading global experts on October 15, 2020 as part of the *AMR in the Light of COVID-19* webinar series.

Links to Resources:



**Infection Control
Basics**



**Tools for Healthcare
Settings**



**Learn More
About WASH**



**Vaccines and
AMR**