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WHO uncovers big variations in antibiotics consumption

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The "WHO Report on Surveillance of Antibiotic Consumption" looked at antibiotic use in 65 countries.

According to a recent survey conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), antibiotics are used far more in some countries than in others suggesting that urgent action was needed to slash unnecessary consumption of the medicines.

The "WHO Report on Surveillance of Antibiotic Consumption" looked at antibiotic use in 65 countries and found the Netherlands used 9.78 defined daily doses (DDD) per 1,000 people, while Britain used twice as much and Turkey almost twice as much again, at 38.18 DDD per 1,000 inhabitants.

The survey also looked at which types of antibiotics were being used, and showed some countries - Italy, Spain and Japan - were relatively heavy users of the most precious drugs that the WHO says need to be kept in reserve.

The WHO introduced a classification system last year, saying penicillin-type drugs were recommended as the first line of defence, and that other drugs, on the reserve list, were a last resort and only for use when absolutely necessary.