

Australia invests \$22M to tackle global health threat of AMR

20 November 2020 | News

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The Australian government is taking strong steps to address the risk of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) as part of World Antimicrobial Awareness Week, running from 18-24 November.

AMR is a significant global health threat and is the result of viruses and bacteria changing over time, which can lead to them no longer responding to medicines and medical treatment. AMR makes it harder to treat common infections, which increases the risk of disease spread, illness and death in humans and animals.

Misuse and overuse of antimicrobials are the main contributors to the development of drug-resistant pathogens, which can affect human, and domestic and farm animal health.

Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, said the Australian Government has committed \$22.5 million in this year's Budget to address the priorities identified in Australia's National Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy – 2020 & Beyond.

"We are working to ensure Australian prescribers are turning to antibiotic, antiviral, antifungal and antiparasitic medicines only when they are absolutely necessary," Minister Hunt said.

"Over-prescription of antimicrobials can contribute to antimicrobial resistance. This makes it harder to treat common infections with our standard medicines, so among our actions in response to the risk is continued investment in surveillance of antimicrobial use and resistance.

"We are also supporting the development of a Multi-Drug Resistant Organism (MRO) outbreak response capability with health authorities in the states and territories. Just like the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, quick action and intervention when MROs are detected is critical to keeping on top of the situation."

The government investment is also helping develop a National AMR One Health Research and Development Agenda to identify gaps and priority areas for research on the prevention, detection and containment of AMR across all areas of

research.

A new scoping study on pricing and reimbursement will also examine ways to support and incentivise new products that prevent, detect and contain drug-resistant infections in Australia.