

The epidemic of antibiotic-resistant infections:
a call to action for the medical community
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The Epidemic of Antibiotic-Resistant Infections: A Call to Action for the Medical Community from the Infectious Diseases Society of America FREE

Brad Spellberg, Robert Guidos, David Gilbert, John Bradley, Helen W. Boucher,
W. Michael Scheld, John G. Bartlett, John Edwards, Jr ,
the Infectious Diseases Society of America

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Abstract

The ongoing explosion of antibiotic-resistant infections continues to plague global and US health care. Meanwhile, an equally alarming decline has occurred in the research and development of new antibiotics to deal with the threat. In response to this microbial “perfect storm,” in 2001, the federal Interagency Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance released the “Action Plan to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance; Part 1: Domestic” to strengthen the response in the United States. The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) followed in 2004 with its own report, “Bad Bugs, No Drugs: As Antibiotic Discovery Stagnates, A Public Health Crisis Brews,” which proposed incentives to reinvigorate pharmaceutical investment in antibiotic research and development. The IDSA's subsequent lobbying efforts led to the introduction of promising legislation in the 109th US Congress (January 2005–December 2006). Unfortunately, the legislation was not enacted. During the 110th Congress, the IDSA has continued to work with congressional leaders on promising legislation to address antibiotic-resistant infection. Nevertheless, despite intensive public relations and lobbying efforts, it remains unclear whether sufficiently robust legislation will be enacted. In the meantime, microbes continue to become more resistant, the antibiotic pipeline continues to diminish, and the majority of the public remains unaware of this critical situation. The result of insufficient federal funding; insufficient surveillance, prevention, and control; insufficient research and development activities; misguided regulation of antibiotics in agriculture and, in particular, for food animals; and insufficient overall coordination of US (and international) efforts could mean a literal return to the preantibiotic era for many types of infections. If we are to address the antimicrobial resistance crisis, a concerted, grassroots effort led by the medical community will be required.

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