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Antimicrobial stewardship: A general overview and highlight on pharmacist role

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Antimicrobial resistant microbes became a globally recognized threat for humans and one of the most challenging health problems. If resistance continues to grow at the current pace it can lead to 10 million deaths per year by 2050. This burden is in fact caused by both emerging antimicrobial resistance and “dry” pipeline related to antimicrobial industry. Antimicrobial misuse was largely blamed for this widespread resistance and strategies were built to promote rational antimicrobial prescribing. Antimicrobial stewardship is one of the most recognized strategies to limit antimicrobial misuse in healthcare settings. By combining many practices, most notably; limiting the use of antibiotics to the narrowest possible spectrum antimicrobial for the shortest duration of time, antimicrobial stewardship is believed to be one of our most important weapons to be used in the open war against antimicrobial resistance. The most important compelling factor “in my opinion” for antimicrobial stewardship as a primary tool to combat antimicrobial resistance is its feasibility. Antimicrobial stewardship requires minimal financial and time investments to be accomplished and can be configured to fit almost all health care settings. Despite its feasibility and applicability, antimicrobial stewardship is not free of criticism. Pharmacists play a vital role in antimicrobial stewardship programs. In their 2007 guidelines for developing an institutional program to enhance antimicrobial stewardship, IDSA recognize pharmacists (infectious diseases trained) as an essential member and possible co-director for the program. New training courses have been developed to help pharmacists to gain knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill their natural role in the lead of antimicrobial stewardship programs in their hospitals.

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