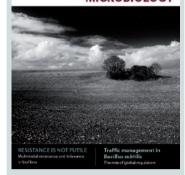




MICROBIOLOGY



► COVER: 'Field of resistance' by George Marshall, inspired by the Review on p928.









ost readers would agree that devising and implementing effective solutions to the problem of antibacterial resistance is a key unmet medical need. Unfortunately, this everincreasing threat to public health has been accompanied by both a marked decline in the level of industrial research that is aimed at discovering novel antibacterial agents and an increase in drug-development timelines from discovery to market. Consequently, prolonging the clinically useful life of current anti-infective drugs, and introducing appropriate chemical modifications that delay the onset of resistance in new antibiotics, would be a useful strategy to address the dearth of antimicrobial therapies. On page 958, Martínez, Baquero and Andersson propose methodological guidelines that should allow researchers to predict the development of resistance to an antibiotic before its therapeutic introduction. The authors argue that this strategy of 'resisting resistance' will be important in achieving the efficient control of infectious diseases.

As a therapeutic class in the fight against infectious diseases, vaccines are generally considered to be the health-care intervention that provides the best value. Indeed, vaccines have been highly effective in eliminating or significantly decreasing the occurrence of many diseases. Poliomyelitis is one such disease in which vaccination has been hugely successful in reducing global incidence. However, as pointed out by Chumakov and colleagues (page 952), the remarkable 50-year-long decline in the incidence of poliomyelitis has stalled in the past 7 years, and an urgent re-assessment of the polio-eradication and post-eradication campaign strategies is needed. In their Opinion, the authors propose that poliomyelitis vaccination programmes should be continued into the foreseeable future and that high levels of population immunity be maintained.

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