

Antimicrobial stewardship toolkit updated to support World AMR Awareness Week

This week, 18–24 November 2023, many national dental organisations including the British Dental Association (BDA) came together to support the World Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Awareness Week and its theme ‘Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together’.

Understanding AMR and the drivers for its development will help healthcare professionals work together to reduce its emergence and spread. It is well documented that the more we use antimicrobial agents, the more drug resistance will develop.

If no action is taken, AMR infections are predicted to lead to 10 million deaths annually by 2050 – a number higher than the total deaths caused by COVID-19 during the pandemic period.

Therefore, dental professionals have worked together to update the online dental antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) toolkit with resources for dental teams, students and patients as well as wider healthcare professionals.¹ The range of educational resources include a new website for students and educators providing links to various online training courses.²

The dental profession already focuses on the prevention of oral diseases to reduce the incidence of severe infections that necessitate the use of antimicrobial agents. Adhering to the best practice recommendations aimed at preventing infections, in addition to stewarding the use of antimicrobial agents, are very important. Accordingly, ‘Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention’³ is included in the updated AMS toolkit.¹ It is also acknowledged that a system-level change is required to facilitate the provision of best practice. Furthermore, the healthcare professionals need to look to the future and ensure appropriate disposal of antimicrobials to reduce environmental contamination. Guidance on the appropriate disposal of waste in healthcare settings including dentistry is available in HTM 07-01⁴ and SHTN 3.⁵

BDJ readers are encouraged to make the most out of the above-mentioned resources to ensure that they and their dental teams are working together to help keep patients safe by tackling the problem of AMR.

Dental Antimicrobial Stewardship in Scotland is via <https://www.sapg.scot/guidance-qi-tools/dental-stewardship/>. SAPG Dental statement recommending phenoxymethylpenicillin as first line when antibiotics are required for acute dento-alveolar infections is available via <https://www.sapg.scot/media/5473/statement-on-pen-v-in-dental-infections.pdf>.

References

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4. NHS England. HTM 07-01: Safe and sustainable management of healthcare waste. November 2022. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/B2159iii-health-technical-memorandum-07-01.pdf> (accessed November 2023).
5. Health Facilities Scotland. NHSScotland Waste Management Guidance (SHTN 3). Available at: <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/publications/waste-management-shtn-3/> (accessed November 2023). ✦

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