Article Summary:

Antibiotic Resistance Now 'Global Threat', WHO Warns by Pippa Stephens

In her article, "Antibiotic resistance now 'global threat', WHO warns" (2014), Pippa Stephens, the health reporter for BBC News reveals that a new health threat is looming with global impact. Old diseases are resurging, according to a new World Health Organization (WHO) report, due to their growing resistance to antibiotics. Dr Keiji Fukuda, assistant director-general at WHO, said "This is posing a major global threat" with the WHO organization calling for, " more preventative measures against infection"[1].

The WHO reports they analyzed data from 114 countries, and, in every region, found antibiotics that had successfully treated infections, were becoming ineffective. Unless urgent significant action were taken, the implications would be devastating. The report investigated bacteria that cause diseases, such as pneumonia, diarrhea, and blood infection. In particular, three antibiotics are already failing to work on half the patients that are treated with them. These are:

A. "carbapenem – a so-called "last-resort" drug used to treat people with life-threatening infections"[2].

B. "antibiotics for E.coli urinary tract infections which had increased from "virtually zero" in the 1980s to being ineffective in more than half of cases today"[3].

C. treatment for gonorrhea, a sexually transmitted disease is resistant to antibiotics now "in the UK, Austria, Australia Canada, France, Japan, Norway, South Africa, Slovenia and Sweden"[4].

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1. Stephens, P. *Antibiotic resistance now 'global threat', WHO warns "*, 2014. Web. 15 May, 2014 <http://m.bbc.co.uk/news/health-27204988>.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

The WHO reports million people daily infected with these diseases. The author of the article, P. Stephens highlights the authority of the report first by quoting Dr. Keiji Fukuda, assistant director-general at the WHO, in the first instance. She further quotes chief medical officer for England, Prof Dame Sally Davies, who said:

> "The rise in drug-resistant infections was comparable to the threat of global warming"[5].

Accordingly, Dr. Jennifer Cohn, medical director of Medecins sans Frontiers' Access Campaign, said that they see horrendous rates of antibiotic resistance wherever they look in their field operations. Pippa Stephens' points out to the fact that the report identifies three reasons for this scourge. The first given is that bacteria naturally mutate, until they become immune to antibiotics. This is a basic accepted fact. However, the fact that firstly doctors are over-prescribing them is accelerating the bacteria's mutation to defend itself much sooner, than would normally happen. Then, patients are careless with taking the treatment with many not finishing their course given them.

The WHO says more new antibiotics need to be developed, since antibiotics were one of the pillars of our health system and governments should take significant actions to improve efforts to prevent infections and also change how we produce, prescribe and use antibiotics[6]. Apart from aggressive development of new antibiotics, the report called for practical preventative measures, such as hygiene, infection control, condoms and vaccinations. Professor Nigel Brown, President of the UK Society for General Microbiology, said that it has been vital for microbiologists to develop new approaches in order to tackle antimicrobial resistance.

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5. Stephens, P. *Antibiotic resistance now 'global threat', WHO warns "*, 2014. Web. 15 May, 2014 <http://m.bbc.co.uk/news/health-27204988>.
6. Ibid.

Unless governments, scientists and the medical community take "urgent co-ordinated action" there will be major outbreaks of diseases, once curable, that will kill millions. The article is clear, authoritative and current, presenting the issue in a fair unbiased manner.

Reference List

Stephens, P. *"Antibiotic resistance now 'global threat', WHO warns "*.Web. 2014. http://m.bbc.co.uk/news/health-27204988