



News Release

Charities charged to come together to prevent antibiotics disaster

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Charities will today be encouraged to “stop working in silos” and instead join together to defeat the biggest health crisis facing human existence – antibiotic resistance.

Good causes representing everyone from heart disease victims to military veterans will be at a roundtable discussion (*Tuesday May 15*) to examine the problem – which currently kills around 700,000 people per year globally.

And they will hear how collecting money to discover new remedies for diseases such as cancer, could be rendered pointless unless alternatives are found to our increasingly redundant antibiotics.

“Imagine the tragedy of a patient battling through treatment – possibly using a new drug paid for through hard-won charitable donations – and then succumbing to a deadly infection such as MRSA” said Professor Colin Garner, Chief Executive of Antibiotic Research UK (ANTRUK), who are organising the meeting. “This is an example where we must work together and not be bound by the single issue we champion – because that narrow-minded thinking could cost lives.”

Whilst health charities are high on the list of important attendees to the meeting (hosted by Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England), input is also desperately sought from a wide range of good causes.

Continued Colin Garner: “Research has shown that antibiotics have leached into our seawater and our sewerage system and the more our bodies are wrongly exposed to antibiotics, the more chance we have of bacteria mutating and causing superbugs.

So we would like to see environmental organisations play a part. Antibiotic resistance is abnormally high in rough sleepers – and so we'll be inviting those working with the homeless to make a contribution, too. And since third sector organisations have such expertise in relating to the public, some assistance in counselling those fighting superbugs and getting messages across about not pestering doctors for antibiotics, would also be useful.”

Formed in 2014, ANTRUK is the only charity in the world solely dedicated to fighting antibiotic resistant infections. It pitches itself as the “small charity fighting the world’s biggest health problem” with dire warnings that unless new medications are found to replace current antibiotics, we could return to a pre-medicine age where people die from something as minor as an infected scratch.

Garner says it is crucial that charities reach out to one another and work in partnership, recognising each other’s expertise and even sharing resource. He believes passionately that antibiotic resistance can only be beaten by a whole-society solution and recently called for a grand alliance to be formed of government, charities, researchers, academics and the public aimed at:

- Reducing antibiotic resistance in hospitals and the community
- Lowering the use of antibiotics in farming
- Shrinking the level of antibiotics and antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the environment and,
- Seeing the introduction of at least five new antibiotics against gram-negative bacteria by 2030.

The UK charities roundtable meeting on antimicrobial resistance takes place at Medical Research Council Conference Centre, One Kemble Street, London WC2B 4AN, on Tuesday 15 May, between 2-5pm.

- Ends -

For further information

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