



Press statement

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Response to calls from Lord Jim O'Neil for part of the drugs industry to be taken over to make new antibiotics

Professor Colin Garner, Chief Executive, Antibiotic Research UK said 'Lord O'Neill's idea of the state taking over the business of antibiotic drug discovery and development is not as far fetched as it sounds. Governments around the world are the payers of nearly all medicines given to patients for curing their illnesses. So if the government pays then why should it not set up its own state run pharma business by taking over existing antibiotic businesses. It is estimated that the antibiotic market worldwide is around \$20 billion. If these assets were rolled into a single global antibiotic pharma business then this would be a substantial player. Governments have been reluctant to put skin in the game regarding reimbursement models and pharma have voted with their feet regarding developing new antibiotics. So Jim O'Neill in his typical forthright way is saying lets do things differently. I would add a further proposition to the mix and that is to forget about returns on investment and turn to the Third Sector to step in where pharma has not. After all most of the basic science behind developing new drugs is carried out by charities amongst which I would include universities. So how about a virtual entity composed of the top basic scientists in universities from around the globe being put together to work collaboratively on the antibiotic resistance problem. I have often thought there is all the expertise in academia to form a virtual pharmaceutical company. After all many pharma scientists turn to academia to solve some of the problems they face whether this be toxicology, pharmacology or molecular epidemiology. Lord O'Neill's proposal of a \$2 billion global fund would go much further in academia and the Third Sector then it would in pharma. Creative thinking is what is needed. The clock is ticking to 2050 as Lord O'Neill pointed out in his AMR review ja similar situation described by the bulletin of atomic scientists who tell us its 2 minutes to midnight before nuclear annihilation. It may not be nuclear annihilation we should be worried about but a worldwide antibiotic resistance pandemic.

For further information

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