



News Release

Superbug superhero is running for your lives

Hearing how dangerously close his wife came to catching a deadly superbug has prompted Sale man Tris Pocock (*pictured*) to pound the streets and raise money for charity.

The 45-year-old University of Manchester Senior Lecturer learned how, shortly after being diagnosed with blood cancer, his wife had witnessed the kind of shoddy hospital cleaning that could help killer infections like MRSA thrive.

This shocking experience, allied to recently becoming a dad and experiences of healthcare in Africa, have spurred Tris on to complete a half-marathon for the

World's only charity dedicated to fighting superbugs – Antibiotic Research UK
(ANTRUK).

By completing the course, Tris wants to inspire a troupe of runners to take to the track to fight superbugs and sign-up to the Simplyhealth Great Manchester Run for ANTRUK (Sunday 20 May). After all, health experts have labelled the problem of antibiotic resistance as, “one of the biggest threats to global health” (1).

Said Tris: “I think this is a good cause because it's fairly unique. We take antibiotics for granted and don't necessarily understand the significance of antibiotic resistance. It is all very well treating serious conditions like heart disease but patients are reliant on antibiotics and if they don't work anymore, it is a lost cause.”

Since the discovery of penicillin by Sir Alexander Fleming in 1928, antibiotics have been seen as wonder-drugs and have been used in the treatment of infections such as pneumonia. A recent report showed that a fifth of antibiotics prescribed by doctors in England were unnecessary (2) and over-use and abuse of antibiotics has fuelled resistance to the drugs causing 700,000 deaths per year globally. Tris saw this for himself whilst working for Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) in Zambia, where, he says, “they were dished-out like sweets.”

Vulnerable people such as older folks, babies and those who have undergone serious treatment in hospital are particularly susceptible to antibiotic resistant infections including MRSA – which can be transmitted through dirty catheters and even unclean hospital bed rails.

After her diagnosis, Tris' wife was placed in strict isolation when she saw a cleaner using the same cloth to clean a door handle as he had used for the toilet. ANTRUK recently called on hospital visitors to become vigilant and report any issues of poor cleaning to authorities – particularly at this time when NHS resources are stretched and nurses are busy trying to cope with demand.

“We need to try and stop the spread of bacterial infection and find new treatments to replace our antiquated antibiotics” said Professor Colin Garner, Founder and Chief Executive of ANTRUK. “The latter means Government, voluntary sector organisations and the pharmaceutical industry working together. It is also down to all

of us to follow Tris' example and raise awareness and cash to prevent us returning to a pre-antibiotic age when something as simple as a scratch could prove fatal.”

Tris is aiming to raise £500 by completing the London Landmarks Half Marathon – a brand new race which takes in Westminster and the City of London, passing Big Ben before turning again by Dick Whittington's house!

Recently becoming a dad has made Tris even more aware of the need to protect the health of future generations and he hopes his efforts will inspire runners to take part in the Simplyhealth Great Manchester Run for ANTRUK. The charity has 25 places available at a discounted price of just £15. To register and learn more about fundraising to beat the superbugs, visit <https://www.antibioticresearch.org.uk/calling-runners-cyclists-help-fight-antibiotic-resistance-antruks-2018-sporting-events-programme/> or email peter.gibson@antibioticresearch.org.uk

Back Tris by going to his JustGiving page

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tristan-pocock1>

- **Ends** -

For further information

Please contact Peter Gibson on 0759 202 8142 or email peter.gibson@antibioticresearch.org.uk

Learn more about Antibiotic Research UK (ANTRUK) at www.antibioticresearch.org.uk

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References

- (1) The World Health Organisation fact sheet on antibiotic resistance
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/antibiotic-resistance/en/>
- (2) “Fifth of prescribed antibiotics are unnecessary, study finds” The Guardian
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/feb/27/fifth-of-prescribed-antibiotics-are-unnecessary-study-finds>