



News Release

Doctor predicts antibiotics apocalypse

Humankind is sleepwalking into a health catastrophe that could cost countless lives.

And nowhere is the problem of antibiotic ignorance more acute than in Oldham, where patients demand the drugs from their doctors causing themselves danger, whilst local health chiefs sit idly as the problem escalates.

That is the stark message from South Chadderton GP Dr Anita Sharma, who argues that a lack of support from decision-makers and the pharmaceutical industry could mean patients die from something as simple as a scratch.

“The over-use of antibiotics has meant that bacteria in our bodies has become resistant to what was once considered as a wonder drug” said Dr Sharma, “that means conditions such as pneumonia and TB could become virulent and even more deadly. This is potentially a bigger problem than cancer and could result in millions of fatalities.

Doctors often wrongly prescribe antibiotics out of a sense of fear – and yet simple diagnostic tools could give them clear guidance. Point-of-care C-reactive protein testing (which involves the patient receiving a pin-prick test) – guides GPs on whether or not antibiotics are needed in just four minutes. Used throughout Europe, funding for it has been refused by some clinical commissioning groups across the UK.

A recent survey by health publishers MGP and charity **Antibiotic Research UK (ANTRUK)** showed that medics were being verbally and physically assaulted for not dispensing antibiotics. Backing Dr Sharma, Professor Colin Garner, Chief Executive of

ANTRUK added: “Impatient patients must stop believing that antibiotics are a quick cure for everything and cease putting pressure on doctors or sneakily buying the drugs from dubious sources.

Our recent survey also showed that health chiefs were reluctant to invest in materials, education or equipment to reduce the problem and Dr Sharma is quite correct – this could cost lives.”

On the plus side, more and more surgeries, walk-in centres and hospitals are recognising that over-use of antibiotics could constitute a crisis. Dr Shama's South Chadderton surgery was one of many involved in ANTRUK'S recent Great British Tea Party campaign, which raised money to find new medications to replace our antibiotics as well as backing our vital patient support programme . The practice's Patient Participation Group has also agreed to do its bit to publicise the message.

Concluded Professor Garner: “The world needs a wake-up call about drug-resistant infections and the NHS is the right place for that to start. It is also encouraging that it is a local GP in Oldham who is actively highlighting the problem; as a borough Oldham does prescribe far too many antibiotics. It is my hope that Dr Sharma and South Chadderton is the lead for others to follow and I implore you all to volunteer, donate and make some noise – join us in the resistance against antibiotic resistance.”

Learn more about ANTRUK and donate to their fight to save lives by visiting <https://www.antibioticresearch.org.uk>

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For further information

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