

Report on Economic Impacts of Antimicrobial Resistance

Why in news?

The *Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance* (IACG) has brought out a report on economic impacts of antimicrobial resistance.

What is the report for?

- Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) refers to a condition of antibiotics becoming inefficient against a wide range of pathogenic bacteria.
- It is emerging as a global public health concern and is acknowledged by policymakers as a major health crisis.
- But the economic impacts of AMR are not taken into account by many.
- The IACG report titled “No Time to Wait: Securing The Future From Drug Resistant Infections” brings attention to the financial implications of AMR.

What are the highlights?

- In about 3 decades from now, uncontrolled AMR will cause global economic shocks on the scale of the 2008-09 financial crisis.
- Nearly 10 million people are estimated to die annually from resistant infections by 2050.
- The health-care costs and the cost of food production will spike as a result of this.
- On the other hand, the income inequality will widen too.
- In the worst-case scenario, the world will lose 3.8% of its annual GDP by 2050 on this account.
- Alongside, 24 million people will be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030.
- For high- and mid-income nations, the price of prevention, at \$2 per head a year, is extremely affordable.
- For poorer countries, the price is higher but still modest compared to the costs of an antibiotic disaster.
- The ICAG thus calls for the nations to acknowledge this eventuality, and act to fight against it.

Where does India stand?

- India first published almost 9 years ago the broad outlines of a plan to fight antimicrobial resistance.

- But the difficulty has been in implementing it, given the twin challenges of antibiotic overuse and underuse.
- On the one hand, many Indians still die of diseases like sepsis and pneumonia because they do not get the right drug at the right time.
- On the other hand, a poorly regulated pharmaceutical industry means that antibiotics are freely available to the affordable ones.

Click [here](#) to read more on causes for AMR and the measures in place.

What is to be done?

- Some immediate steps could include measures such as phasing out critical human-use antibiotics in the animal husbandry sector, such as quinolones.
- The only way to postpone resistance is through improved hygiene and vaccinations, and it demands a multi-stakeholder approach.
- It is a challenging task as India still struggles with low immunisation rates and drinking water contamination.
- So besides regulators, it needs the involvement of the private industry, philanthropic groups and citizen activists.
- Private pharmaceutical industries must take it upon themselves to distribute drugs in a responsible manner.
- Philanthropic charities must fund the development of new antibiotics, while citizen activists must drive awareness.
- The emerging challenge is a serious one, as once crucial antibiotics are lost to humankind, they may be lost for decades.

Source: The Hindu

Quick Fact

Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance

- In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance.
- It called for the establishment of the Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (IACG).
- The IACG's mandate is to provide practical guidance for approaches needed to ensure sustained, effective global action to address AMR.
- It is also tasked to report back to the UN Secretary-General in 2019.
- The IACG Secretariat is hosted by WHO, with contributions from FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).



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