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Editorial

Act Now—A Global Call to Confront Antimicrobial Resistance

Christina Bareja

As we mark World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW) 2025, the urgency of the global antimicrobial resistance (AMR) threat has never been clearer. WAAW is a global campaign that runs annually from 18 to 24 November. The campaign aims to raise awareness and increase understanding of AMR and to promote global action to tackle the emergence and spread of drug-resistant microorganisms. The 2025 campaign, led by the Quadripartite Joint Secretariat on AMR – the World Health Organization (WHO); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) – emphasises a One Health approach, recognising that AMR spans human, animal, and environmental health.

This year's theme, *'Act Now: Protect Our Present, Secure Our Future*', is not merely a slogan; it is a call to all sectors of society to confront a threat that is already reshaping our health, our animals' health, our food systems and economies.

In September 2024, the United Nations High-Level Meeting on AMR resulted in a political declaration[1] that set ambitious global targets and commitments to combat AMR and to ultimately reduce AMR-related deaths by 10% by 2030. Countries signatory to the political declaration committed to strengthen their national capacities for sustainable surveillance systems. *Australia's National AMR Strategy – 2020 and Beyond*[2] recognises the criticality of surveillance to detect emerging resistances and monitor trends to inform actions and responses to contain AMR.

Australia has well established surveillance systems for AMR in the human health sector. Many of these systems have a long history of publishing in this journal. This issue, released to coincide with WAAW 2025, shares the latest findings from long standing surveillance programs.

The series of Australian Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (AGAR) annual reports on bloodstream infections are a reminder that AMR is present now, in Australia and having serious consequences for patients.

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These reports also acknowledge that AMR presents challenges now and into the future for infection control in Australian hospitals. The annual report from the National Neisseria Network (NNN) on *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* reports several unsettling findings including the detection of isolates with an extensively drug-resistant profile in Australia and an increase in concerning high level resistances, for which there are sometimes very few available treatment options. The NNN report on *Neisseria meningitidis* demonstrates the importance of local surveillance driving local clinical guidelines, in the global context of ever-changing patterns of drug resistance among the various meningococcal serotypes implicated in invasive meningococcal disease. Finally, the discussion piece on surveillance of extensively-drug-resistant *Shigella* presents the suggestions of several authors heavily involved in such surveillance, for enhancements to the systems central to Australian responses to an emerging public health threat.

The reports published here today, to mark the start of WAAW 2025, make it clear that there are substantial challenges to be faced in meeting the growing and multifaceted threat of antimicrobial resistance in Australia and globally. Everyone has a role to play in addressing antibiotic resistance. Together, we can contribute to keeping antimicrobials effective and build a healthier, more sustainable world for generations to come.

References

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