

# Antibiotics off the Menu

## World Consumer Rights Day

*Hotel Jaipur Palace, Jaipur*  
Tuesday, March 15, 2016



## **1. Background**

The World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) is observed on March 15, 2016 in most of the countries. The day has been chosen since March 15, 1962, when the then US President John F Kennedy addressed the US Congress on the issue of consumer rights. The international consumer movement at present marks March 15 every year to raise global awareness about consumer rights.

The WCRD was firstly organised in a planned way on March 15, 1983 and has currently become an annual event for solidarity within the international consumer movement and creating awareness about consumer rights. After two years, i. e. on April 09, 1985, the United Nations' General Assembly adopted the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection, following a decade of hard lobbying by Consumers International (CI), then known as International Organisation of Consumers Unions (IOCU), and other consumer organisations. The Guidelines embrace the principles of the eight consumer rights and provide a framework for strengthening national consumer protection policies.

With the UN's adoption of the Guidelines, consumer rights were finally elevated to a position of international recognition and legitimacy, which was duly acknowledged by developed and developing countries alike. Despite this, they continued to be ignored or trivialised by governments, producers and powerful interests. WCRD draws attention towards such violations and provides a platform for consumer groups to address them in the countries where they operate.

## **2. Context**

Consumers International's work promotes consumers' access to nutritious and safe food. The theme for 'World Consumer Rights Day' 2016 was 'Antibiotics off the Menu' and Consumers International campaigned with Members around the world for fast food companies to make a global commitment to cease the sale of meat which is raised with the routine use of antibiotics that are important part of medicines.

Antibiotic resistance is rising to dangerously high-levels in all parts of the world. New resistance mechanisms emerge and spread globally every day, threatening the ability to treat the prevailing common infectious diseases. Increasing number of infections, such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, blood poisoning and gonorrhoea – are becoming more difficult and sometimes impossible, to be treated as antibiotics are becoming less effective.

In countries where antibiotics can be bought without a prescription, emergence and spread of resistance is observed to be worse. Similarly, in countries without standard treatment guidelines, antibiotics are often over-prescribed by health experts and are thus over-used by

the public. Without prompt efforts, we are heading towards a post-antibiotic era, where common infections and minor injuries can prove to be fatal.

Around 50 percent of the world's antibiotics are used in agriculture. With almost 100,000 restaurants worldwide, McDonald's, Subway and KFC are in a position to use their enormous sale capacity to make a big difference to the global supply chain.

On WCRD i.e. March 15, 2016, CI and its Members around the world called on the international fast food companies to make global commitments so as to prohibit serving meat being raised with the routine use of antibiotics consumed in human medicines.

### 3. Current Scenario and Objectives

Increasing antimicrobial resistance is in fact is an issue of concern and is leading towards global health crisis. Medicine is losing more and more mainstay antimicrobials as pathogens develop resistance. Due to this, second-line treatments are less effective, more expensive, more toxic and sometimes extremely difficult to control. Further, there is found to be in the supply of many such drugs.

Gonorrhoea is at present resistant to multiple types of drugs. An epidemic of multidrug-resistant typhoid fever is rolling across parts of Asia and Africa. Even after providing best facilities and attention only around half of the total cases of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis can be successfully cured.

With few replacement products in the pipeline, the world is heading towards a post-antibiotic era where common infections will again prove to be fatal. This perhaps would be the end of modern medicine as we all are aware of. If such trends continue, sophisticated medical treatment processes like organ transplantation, joint replacements, cancer chemotherapy and care of pre-term infants will become an issue of concern or might even become too deadly to cure.

The main objective of the Campaign was to call on McDonald's, Subway and KFC, as three of the largest global fast food chains to take a pledge to cease selling meat of animals with routinely administered antibiotics commonly used in human medicines. The campaign also included national fast food companies.

The commitment taken from the mentioned fast food chains included:

- Defining a **global, time-bound action plan** to phase out the routine use of antibiotics used in medicines across all meat and poultry supply chains.
- Adopting third-party auditing of antibiotics usage policies and benchmarking results showing progress in meeting the above mentioned goal.

## 4. Event

Taking into consideration the importance of the theme and the occasion, CUTS organised a public event in Jaipur on March 15, 2016 to observe the WCRD. The event took place at Jaipur Palace Hotel.

## 5. Participants

Representatives from various Non-government Organisations (NGOs) from and around the capital city of Rajasthan, Jaipur, representatives from government departments, experts from academics and media also participated in the event. Around 68 participants got benefited from the event.



## 6. Proceedings

The event commenced with the welcome note given by Varidhi Singh, Project Officer of CUTS followed by opening address given by George Cheriyan Director, CUTS International and Council Member, CI, (UK).

George elucidated that antibiotic resistance contributes to global health crisis where the overuse of antibiotics in farming is a major contributing factor and it is predicted to increase further.



He also opined that around half of the antibiotics produced globally are used in agriculture and growth promoters. Cheriyan mentioned that the review on antimicrobial resistance commissioned by the UK government predicts that deaths from anti-microbial resistance will reach to almost 10mn per year by 2050. He stated that reducing the use of antibiotics in agriculture is an urgent and necessary step for tackling this crisis. Moreover, data has revealed that in the recent past, there has been a six-fold

increase in the amount of antibiotics being consumed by the Indians. Cheriyan further emphasised on the need for right approach in prescribing medicines by medical professionals, regular prescription audits and digital repository of patients' medical history, among other important measures to be taken to combat rapidly increasing misuse of antibiotics.

Deepak Saxena, Sr. Programme Coordinator of CUTS explicated the theme through a presentation. The key aspects of the presentation were:

- Significance of March 15 as 'World Consumer Rights Day'.
- An overview of Antibiotic Resistance. Owing to the abundance and misuse of antibiotics across the world in agriculture and human medicine.
- Aims and objectives of the campaign.
- Need to reduce the use of antibiotics in agriculture?
- Annual deaths attributing to antibiotic resistance by 2050.
- Use of antibiotics in food production.
- Global action plan of World Health Organisation (WHO) 2015.
- Information and message provided by the food companies, so far.
- Consumers' role and vigilance to overcome this issue?



Dr Nirmal Kumar Gurbani, Professor, Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) University, Jaipur gave a presentation on antimicrobial resistance. The key points of his presentation were:

- Why antimicrobial resistance is a problem?
  - Current global and Indian Scenario of Antibiotic Resistance.
  - Relationship between resistance and use of antibiotic.
  - Non-medical use of antibiotics.
  - Environment and antibiotic resistance.
- Drug resistance threatens to reverse medical progress.
  - The consequences of antibiotic resistance and
  - Factors responsible for inappropriate use of antibiotics in community.

Furthermore, Gurbani revealed about the indiscriminate usage of antibiotics in agriculture as well as animal husbandry. He also stated concern on unethical practices by medical and pharmaceutical professionals. He recommended that Standard Treatment Guidelines should be strictly followed.



Dr Ashok Gupta Sr. Professor and Superintendent, Jay Kay Lon Hospital, under S M S Medical College, Jaipur, recommended that the counter sale of antibiotics should not be promoted and antibiotics should be prescribed only when required . He also said that some diseases are diagnosed at a later stage therefore patients should not go. Doctor shopping is the practice of visiting multiple physicians to obtain multiple prescriptions for otherwise illegal drugs. It is a common practice of drug addicts and suppliers of drug addicts.



He also said that antimicrobial resistance threatens effective prevention and treatment of an ever-increasing range of infections caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses and fungi. Any important antibiotics have not been developed since past 30 years. There were an estimated 480,000 new cases of multi-drug resistant MDR-TB in the world in 2013. Antibiotics are in fact the most commonly sold drugs in India.



Sanjay Jhala, Deputy Director, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan, stated that though State Government organises such awareness events also every year, but this time, it has encouraged two renowned Non-government Organisations (NGOs) working for consumer rights in the State to come forward and observe WCRD.

Jhala also added that on account of CUTS initiation, a major number of Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCOs) and NGOs have been observing this day at various-levels in Rajasthan. He also stated that the main motive behind this was to ensure that the message has been delivered well at the grassroot level.

Dr Kanika Varma, Professor, Department of Home Science, University of Rajasthan gave a presentation to provide a deep insight on the theme. The highlights of her presentation were:

- Role of antibiotics in food chain.
- The chain of antibiotics.
- Drugged chicken story.
- Not only Non-vegetarian but vegetarian products like Honey, Milk etc. also contains antibiotics.
- Recommendations by Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).



She concluded with a small message ‘Safe Food, Safe Eating and Good Health’.

This was followed by an open discussion and as the theme being new and interesting, large number of participants expressed their views and raised their queries, which were duly answered by the speakers.



### **Vote of Thanks**

Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Project Coordinator, CUTS summarised the proceedings of the event, gave vote of thanks to the participants, and lastly made an appeal to the participants to convey the message to more and more people to raise mass awareness.



# Antibiotics off The Menu

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### Programme Schedule

10:30-11.00	<b>Registration and Welcome Tea</b>
11.00-11.05	<b>Welcome</b> Varidhi Singh, Project Officer, CUTS International
11:05-11:20	<b>Opening Address</b> <i>George Cheriyan , Director, CUTS International and Council Member, Consumers International</i>
11:20-11:30	<b>Introducing the theme through Presentation</b> <i>Deepak Saxena, Senior Programme Coordinator, CUTS International</i>
11:30-11:50	<b>Theme Presentation on 'Anti-microbial Resistance'</b> <i>Nirmal K Gurbani, Professor, Indian Institute of Health Management Research, Indian Institute of Health Management Research University, Jaipur</i>
11:50-12:10	<b>Key Note Address</b> <i>Dr Ashok Gupta, Sr. Professor and Superintendent, Jay Kay Lon Hospital, Jaipur</i>
12:10-12:20	<b>Special Address</b> <i>Sanjay Jhala, Deputy Director, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of Rajasthan</i>
12:20-12:30	<b>Special Address</b> <i>Dr Kanika Varma, Professor, Department of Home Science, University of Rajasthan</i>
12:30–12:55	<b>Open Discussion</b>
12:55-13:00	<b>Vote of Thanks</b> <i>Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Project Coordinator, CUTS International</i>
13.00 onwards	<b>Lunch</b>



## **FAQs on Antibiotic Resistance in India**

Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to global health in current scenario. This is increasingly becoming universal. Though this occurs naturally, but misuse of antibiotics in man and animals is accelerating the process of health degeneration. Further, growing number of infections, such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, and gonorrhoea – are becoming harder to treat as the antibiotics used to treat them are becoming less effective. This further leads to longer duration of hospitalisation of the patients, high and expensive medical care costs and increased rate of mortality.

### **What is antibiotic resistance?**

Microbes (bacteria, fungi, parasites and viruses) cause infectious diseases, and anti-microbial agents, such as penicillin, streptomycin, and over 150 others have been developed to combat the severity and spread of many such diseases. The emergence of resistance to such drugs is a natural biological phenomenon. Use of an anti-microbial for any infection, its dosage and longer usage time causes a 'selective pressure' on microbial populations. Under optimal conditions, majority of the infecting microbes would be killed and the patient's immune system can deal with the rest. However, if a few resistant mutants prevail in the population under certain pressure and the treatment is inadequate or the patient's immune system is affected adversely, thereby the mutants can grow. Therefore, the treatment might fail.

### **Why is antibiotic resistance a problem?**

Infections caused by resistant microbes often fail to respond to treatment, resulting in prolonged illness and greater risk of death. When treatment fails or response to treatment is slow, the patient remains infective for a longer time. This provides greater opportunities for the resistant strain to spread to other people.

### **Why should I be concerned about antibiotic resistance?**

Antibiotic resistance has been called one of the world's most pressing public health problems. Almost every type of bacteria has become stronger and less responsive to antibiotic treatment when it is really needed. These antibiotic-resistant bacteria can quickly spread to other family members, schoolmates, and co-workers – threatening the community with a new strain of infectious disease that is more difficult to cure and more expensive to treat. For this reason, antibiotic resistance is among Consultancy Development Centre (CDC's) top concerns. It is more difficult to cure and more expensive to treat. For this reason, antibiotic resistance is among CDC's top concerns.

Antibiotic resistance can cause significant health risk and suffering for children and adults who have common infections, once easily treatable with antibiotics. Microbes can develop resistance to specific medicines. A common misconception is that a person's body becomes

resistant to specific drugs. However, it is in fact the microbes, not the people that have become resistant to the drugs.

If a microbe is resistant to many drugs, treating the infections it causes can become difficult or at times impossible. Someone with an infection that is resistant to a certain medicine can pass that resistant infection to another person. In this way, a hard to treat illness could be spread from person to person. In some cases, the illness can lead to serious disability or even death.

### **How should I use antibiotics to protect myself and my community from antibiotic resistance?**

Here are some measures that should be taken to prevent antibiotic resistance:

- Conveying to the healthcare professional the concern over antibiotic resistance.
- Ask healthcare expert if there are other methods to get better and get symptomatic relief without using antibiotics.
- Taking the prescribed antibiotics as advised by the doctor.
- Discard and dispose off any expired medication.
- Asking doctor about recommended vaccines and persuade your family to prevent infections that might require an antibiotics as treatment.
- Drug doses should never be skipped or to stop before dosage is completed unless advised by the healthcare professional.
- Antibiotics should not be taken for viral infections like a cold or flu.
- Medical professional should be asked to not prescribe antibiotics (in case not essential).
- Antibiotics should not be stored for future usage.
- Never take antibiotics that are prescribed for other patient.

### **How can health experts help prevent the spread of antibiotic resistance?**

Health experts can prevent the spread of antibiotic resistance by observing the following measures:

- Medical experts to prescribe antibiotics only when it is likely to benefit the patient.
- Prescribing antibiotics that target bacteria that is most likely causing the patient's illness and is the only cure.
- Doctors should ask patients to use antibiotics as per the given instructions.
- People should promote appropriate antibiotics usage and conveying this fact to friends, colleagues, relatives and other patients.
- People should continue reviewing and following the latest clinical practice guidelines for common ailments/infections, such as CDC's Adult and Paediatric Academic Detailing Sheets.

**Do the use of growth promoters and other drugs in food-producing animals contribute to the problem?**

Yes. The enhanced food requirements of an expanding world population have led to the widespread routine use of antimicrobials as growth promoters or preventive agents in food-producing animals and poultry flocks. In North America and Europe, an estimated 50 percent in tonnage of all antimicrobial production is used in food-producing animals and poultry flocks. Such practices have contributed to the rise in resistant microbes, which could be transmitted from animals to humans like salmonellosis.

**Why are infections developed from hospital so dangerous?**

Hospitals are a critical component of the antimicrobial resistance problem worldwide. The combination of highly susceptible patients, intensive and prolonged antimicrobial use, and cross-infection have resulted in so called 'nosocomial infections' with highly resistant bacteria. It is extremely difficult to control such infections and the treatment is expensive and difficult to eradicate. Hospitals are also eventual place of treatment for many patients with severe infections due to resistant pathogens acquired in the community. In the wake of the AIDS epidemic, the prevalence of such infections might increase.

**Who needs to take action?**

Those called upon to be vigilant and aware to the problem and take appropriate action comprise consumers, doctors and dispensers, veterinarians, hospital and pathological laboratories managers and as well as governments, pharmaceutical industry personnel, professional societies and international agencies.

## List of Participants

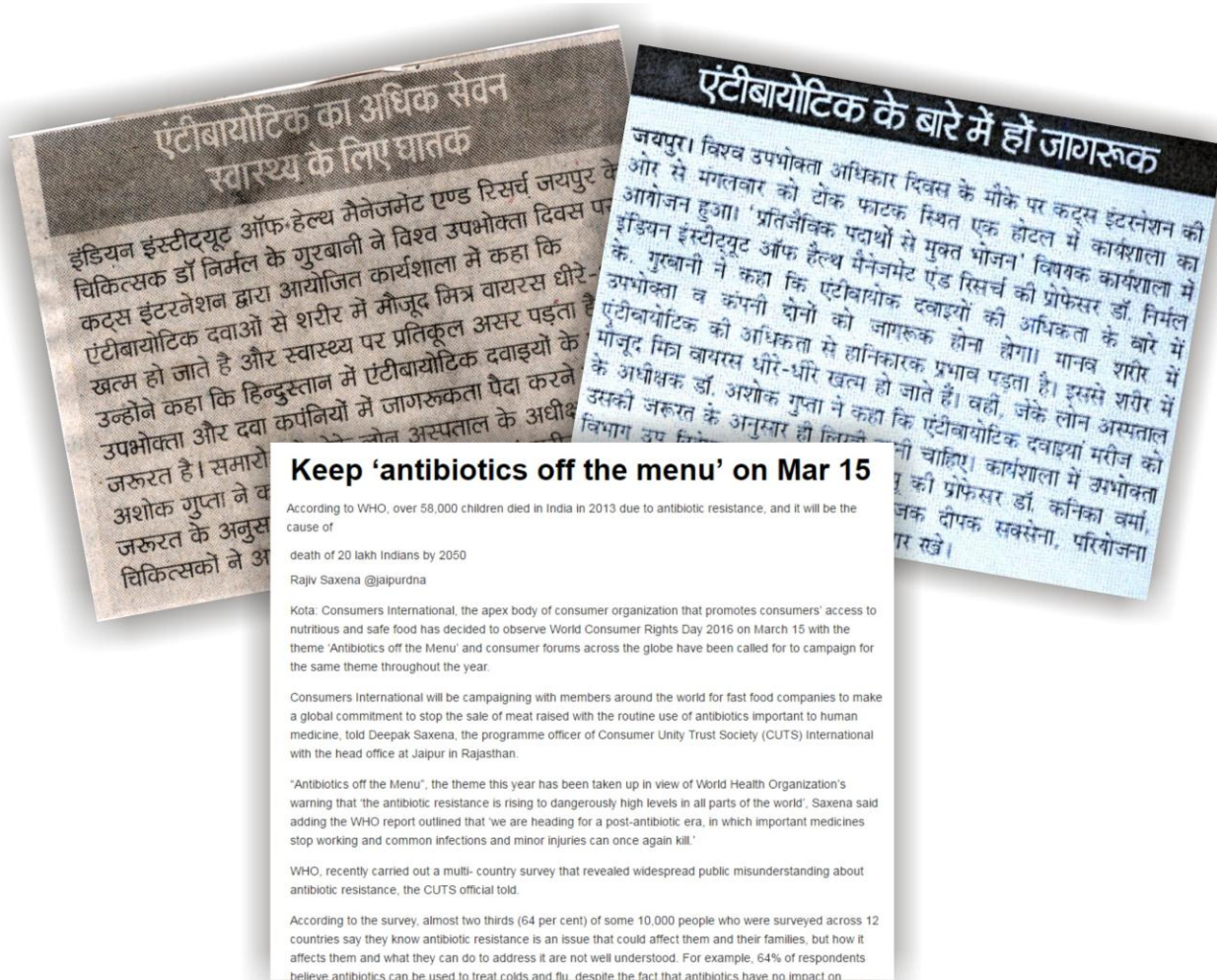
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58.	Bhoop Ram Sharma	Hardev Shiksha avam Jan Kalyan Sansthan, Jaipur	9460062401	
59.	Girdhari Prasad	DD News	8432333352	
60.	Lalit Bhardwaj	Sarojani Naidu Mahila Vikas evam Kalyan Sansthan, Jaipur	9829162810	
61.	Surendra Kumar	Anjuman Sansthan, Jaipur	9983400064, 9829229249	
62.	Ranju Jain	Prem Mandir Sansthan, Jaipur	9414071776	
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## Media Coverage



Hindi news clippings and their links are as below:

1. [http://epaper.dnaindia.com/story.aspx?id=80115&boxid=140963&ed\\_date=2016-03-13&ed\\_code=1310016&ed\\_page=16](http://epaper.dnaindia.com/story.aspx?id=80115&boxid=140963&ed_date=2016-03-13&ed_code=1310016&ed_page=16)
2. [http://www.ptinews.com/news/7210054\\_NGOs-to-campaign-for-antibiotics-free-meat-products.html](http://www.ptinews.com/news/7210054_NGOs-to-campaign-for-antibiotics-free-meat-products.html)
3. <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/ngos-to-campaign-for-antibiotics-free-meat-products/1/618459.html>
4. <http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/ngos-to-campaign-for-antibiotics-free-meat-products-1160312004271.html>