

# TACKLING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE:

**Supporting national measures to address infection prevention and control and water, sanitation and hygiene in health care settings**

**Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)** presents a significant threat to human health. World leaders have agreed that tackling AMR will require addressing both health and agriculture concerns with a focus on prevention. Improving **infection prevention and control (IPC)** and **water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)** is one of the five objectives in the World Health Organization's (WHO) AMR Global Action Plan. Nowhere is reducing infection more important than in health care facilities. Joint, immediate action to address IPC and WASH is essential.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES IN LOW- AND MIDDLE- INCOME COUNTRIES

### WASH

**38%** of health care facilities do not have ANY water source

**19%** do not have improved toilets

**35%** do not have water and soap or alcohol-based hand rub for hand washing

Up to **90%** of health workers do not adhere to recommended hand hygiene practices

### IPC

In Africa, up to **20%** of women get a wound infection after a caesarean section

Hospital-born babies in low-income settings are at a higher risk of being affected by neonatal sepsis, with infection rates **3** to **20** times higher than in high-income settings

On average **15%** of patients will acquire at least one infection in acute care hospitals

### AMR

Prophylactic use of antibiotics is standard in over **80%** of maternity units in several countries

Patients with resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* are **50%** more likely to die than those with a non-resistant infection

Each year hundreds of millions of cases of diarrhoea are treated with antibiotics. Universal access to WASH could reduce this by **60%**

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF POOR WASH AND COMPROMISED IPC

Lack of WASH in health care facilities



Compromised IPC practices

- ① Increased risk of healthcare-associated infections (HAI)
- ② Increased risk of spread of HAI
- ③ Increased burden of expensive, hard-to-treat and life-threatening resistant infections
- ④ Decrease in patient confidence in health care

Overreliance on preventive use of antibiotics

High health care costs and poor health outcomes

Increased use of antibiotics to treat preventable infections

Increased resistance

Addressing these challenges will require accelerating joint efforts to improve WASH, IPC and AMR in health care settings.

# TAKING ACTION

## Goals and objectives

Global Action Plan on AMR's objective three: Reduce the incidence of infection through effective sanitation, hygiene and infection prevention measures.

WASH and IPC efforts aim to support objective three through joint efforts to ensure every health facility, in every setting, has safely managed water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management facilities and implements effective, evidence-based IPC programs and practices to protect the lives of health workers, patients and all facilities users.

## Priority joint AMR, IPC and WASH actions

### GLOBAL

#### Joint advocacy

Raise awareness of the threat of AMR and the critical need to prioritise prevention, particularly in health care facilities, but also in the wider community through universal WASH access.

Ensure WASH in HCF and IPC are prioritised in all AMR global plans, accountability frameworks, policies, and financing mechanisms.

Support global and national leaders to advocate for WASH and IPC in HCF to reduce AMR.

Achieve universal access to and use of adequate toilets and safe drinking water supplies in communities to reduce unnecessary antibiotic use and hospital admissions.

### NATIONAL

#### National action plans

Support the development and implementation of guidelines and National Action Plans for AMR which prioritise IPC<sup>1</sup> and WASH activities and support access to and rational antibiotic use.

Develop systems to strengthen disease surveillance, guidelines on antibiotics use, and laboratory capacity to better diagnose and track HCAs.

Align prevention efforts with existing health plans and prevention activities, particularly quality universal health coverage and maternal, newborn and child health.

### LOCAL

#### Health care facilities

Support the implementation of WASH standards and improvement and the IPC Core Components Guidelines.

Drive efforts to improve and sustain hand hygiene infrastructure and practices and efforts to support adequate, routine cleaning practices, sterilization and safe health care waste management.

Improve the evidence-base of locally relevant interventions to reduce HAI, improve WASH and IPC and support rational use of antibiotics.

<sup>1</sup> New WHO Guidelines on Core Components of IPC and implementation tools.

### Key WHO tools and guidance to support WASH, IPC and AMR progress

- WHO Essential Environmental Standards in Health Care
- Hand hygiene and AMR policy briefing note
- WHO Hand Hygiene guidelines and implementation tools
- Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool
- New WHO Guidelines on Core Components of IPC and implementation tools
- JMP Core Indicators for WASH in HCF
- WHO Sanitation Safety Planning Manual

@ Can be found at:  
<http://www.who.int/gpsc/en/> and [http://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/facilities/en/](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/facilities/en/)

## ACTION in WASH and IPC

Reduce overall antibiotic demand, use and misuse

Reduce opportunity for resistant strains to emerge

Reduce spread of resistant and non-resistant infections

Reduce cost of expensive treatment of resistant infections

Reduce the risk of all health care associated infections

Drive people-centred quality health care

Increase care seeking and staff morale and productivity

And therefore help reduce antimicrobial resistance.