

The Swiss Round Table on Antibiotics fosters the development and availability of antibiotics

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Introduction

Causing about 5 million deaths per year worldwide, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a major and steadily increasing public health threat which compromises the effectiveness of healthcare systems to control and limit bacterial infections, increases the risks of negative outcomes of medical interventions, and puts a heavy burden on the health care system. The recent and ongoing antibiotics shortages have revealed the vulnerability of supply chains and brought to light the necessity for action. The available treatments and current R&D pipelines are not sufficient to tackle AMR, and incentives are needed to support investments in new antimicrobials and lift hurdles to bringing new antibiotics and related products to the market. Additionally, stewardship of existing treatments must be stepped up to maintain their effectiveness and curb the development of additional AMR.

Aims

The Swiss Round Table on Antibiotics (RTA) is a multi-disciplinary, non-profit Swiss association which endeavors to support the development of antimicrobial technologies and ensure that patients with severe infectious diseases have access to treatment. Created in 2019, the association gathers stakeholders from the fields of healthcare, academia, politics, and industry and is active at the Swiss and international levels.

Methods

The RTA promotes public awareness on AMR and contributes to policy initiatives and projects. At the heart of the RTA's current activities is a project that aims to have an alternative (pull) incentive model implemented in Switzerland that, in line with international efforts, fosters the development of new antimicrobial technologies and incentivizes their availability in Switzerland. The project is being rolled out in several phases, starting with an assessment of existing pull models, lessons learned in other countries, and of the existing legal framework, the conduct of interviews and a consultation with key actors in Switzerland, to better identify the specific needs for the Swiss market. A preferred model will be developed and refined for Switzerland, to be implemented first as a pilot before it is fully integrated in the Swiss health care system. The project is conducted by the RTA and supported by public authorities and relevant stakeholders, both in Switzerland and abroad.

Results

The first phase of the project was completed by the end of 2023 with a white paper summarizing the RTA's conclusions from the assessment and the interviews and consultation with the federal administration, the cantons, politics, industry, and insurers, and identifying models deemed suitable for implementation in Switzerland.

Conclusions

In line with public authorities advocating to intensify action against AMR, bold measures are required to combat multi-drug-resistant pathogenic bacteria. A Swiss pull incentive would foster better availability of new and existing antibiotics and antimicrobial technologies in Switzerland and incentivize investments in the research and development of such treatments. The RTA takes leadership in this mission.

Keywords

Antimicrobial resistance, pull incentive, innovation, multi-stakeholder, availability, access.