

Antibiotics

20th Century Time Bomb

By Keith W. Wassung

The first antibiotic, penicillin, became widely available in 1940. Antibiotics have since become a popular weapon in the medical arsenal against disease. Over one-third of all hospital patients are given antibiotics and each year in excess of 240 million antibiotic prescriptions are dispensed in the United States. Although no one can dispute that antibiotics have a place and a purpose, especially in emergency and life saving situations, a growing number of doctors and medical researchers contend that antibiotics have been grossly overused and abused, and, as a result, produce adverse reactions as well as strains of bacteria that have become resistant to antibiotics.

“We’re at the point where the antibiotic cupboard is almost bare. We are victims of our own blindness. We have been taking too many of them and new, deadlier organisms, like the powerful drug-resistant tuberculosis strain, have been emerging as a result.”¹

Jeffrey A. Fisher, MD “The Plague Makers”

There are patients in hospitals that have bacterial infections against which no antibiotics are effective. This is only fifty years after antibiotics were introduced. Until around 1975, almost every case of gonorrhea was treatable with penicillin. Today, in places like Thailand and the Philippines, 90% of all cases are penicillin-resistant. In the U.S, it is above 50%

REVENGE OF THE KILLER MICROBES

Nearly every disease known to medicine has become resistant to at least one antibiotic and several are immune to more than one. One of the MOST alarming things about the cholera epidemic, which has killed as many as 50,000 people in Rwanda, is that it involves a strain of bacterium which cannot be treated with standard antibiotics. Tuberculosis, too, has learned how to outwit doctors. Tuberculosis is an unusually tough microbe. Several strains of TB have emerged in the U.S. that cannot be treated with common antibiotics. Even infections such as staph and strep have become harder to treat as they have acquired resistance to standard antibiotics. One strain of hospital-dwelling staph can now be treated only with a single antibiotic and public health officials have no doubt that it will soon become immune to that one as well. Hospitals could become dangerous places to go and even more so if strep develops universal resistance.²

TIME MAGAZINE

Study says doctors overuse antibiotics

AP: Doctors wrote 12 million antibiotic prescriptions in a single year for colds, bronchitis and other respiratory infections against which drugs are almost always useless, a study found. Such indiscriminate use of antibiotics has contributed to the emergence of drug-resistant bacteria, a growing problem in the United States.³

THE WAR ON BACTERIA

Bacteria, one of the smallest and most plentiful life forms on Earth, thrive successfully in the most inhospitable places and quickly adapt to new conditions in order to survive. We commonly assume that these tiny animals are evil little beasts out to destroy higher forms of life. In fact, all they are trying to do is survive and reproduce, just as humans do.



Bacterial drug resistance is a matter of natural adaptation. The longer a bacterium is exposed to a given drug, the more likely it is to develop universal resistance. Bacteria pull out all of the stops in order to resist drugs. They may release special enzymes that render a drug impotent or change their outer membrane that a drug cannot gain entrance. They can even alter their internal structures so that they are no longer susceptible to the drug.

ANTIBIOTICS & COLDS

Many people go to their doctors and request antibiotics when they have a cold. Antibiotics have no effect on the vast majority of colds that are viral in nature and toxic side effects often occur. Taking antibiotics for colds is not only dangerous, but also a waste of money.

CONSUMERS GUIDE TO MEDICAL TREATMENT, p. 105

Antibiotics are still being prescribed widely to treat the common cold, despite evidence that they are completely ineffective against colds and flu viruses. Such indiscriminate use of antibiotics has created a serious problem involving bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics.⁴

ANTIBIOTICS & ANIMALS

The livestock industry is a major source of the antibiotic overuse that has led to bacterial resistance. ***IT ALONE PURCHASES ONE-HALF OF ALL ANTIBIOTICS SOLD.*** The drugs are incorporated into feed in order to kill bacteria that stunt the growth of animals. However, this gives resistant bacteria the opportunity to develop and multiply. As a result, when you eat these animals, you become infected with the resistant strains. Cooking the meat will kill the bacteria, but the antibiotic remains in the flesh and is absorbed into your bloodstream when the meat is consumed.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

*"In 1992, infections caused by resistant bacteria killed 19,000 U.S. hospital patients and contributed to the deaths of 58,000 more"*⁵

NEWSWEEK

*"Chronic middle ear problems in children have not diminished, despite the number of antibiotics being used to treat them. We have created a whole new kind of ear problem. We have used antibiotics so excessively in the 1st year of life that we have depressed the development of the child's immune system"*⁶

Walter Belenky, MD

*"Penicillin-resistant pneumonia is on the rise and most cases have occurred in people who have had recent antibiotic therapy. In 1981, deaths from pneumonia outnumbered those from automobile accidents."*⁷

The Informed Consumer's Pharmacy

*"Antibiotic therapy is not an effective treatment against otitis media (ear infection) and rates of recurrent infection are significantly higher in children who have been treated with antibiotics."*⁸

Journal of the AMA

DRUG-RESISTANT MICROBES

Only a few years after penicillin came into wide use with World War II, strains of staph had emerged that were immune to the drug. Since then, resistance has spread

MICROBE	DISEASE CAUSED	ANTIBIOTICS THAT NO LONGER WORK
Enterococcus	Blood Poisoning, Surgical infections	Aminoglycosides Cephalosporins Erythromycin Penicillins, tetracycline vancomycin
Haemophilus Influenzae	Meningitis, ear infections, sinusitis pneumonia	Chloramphenicol Penicillins, tetracycline, trimethoprim sulfamethoxazole
Mycobacterium tuberculosis	Tuberculosis	Aminoglycosides Ethambutol Isoniazid, rifampin pyrazinamide
Neisseria Gonorrhoeae	Malaria	Chloroquine
Plasmodium Faicparum	Severe diarrhea	Ampicillin Chloramphenicol Tetracycline Trimethoprim sulfamethoxazole
Shigella dysenteriae	Blood poisoning Pneumonia Surgical infections	Ampicillin Chloramphenicol Tetracycline Trimethoprim sulfamethoxazole
Staphylococcus	Blood Poisoning Pneumonia Surgical infections	All by vancomycin
Streptococcus pneumoniae	Meningitis pneumonia	Aminoglycosides Cephalosporins Penicillins, Tetracycline

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Our bodies contain complex and powerful disease-fighting weapons, consisting primarily of the immune system which works 24 hours a day attacking and destroying foreign invaders such as bacteria and viruses. When this system is functioning at an optimum level, the body can best combat invading microbes. Many of the characteristic symptoms of illness, such as fever and swollen glands, are signs that the immune system processes are proceeding on schedule.

Medical science is beginning to realize that the key to fighting and preventing illness is by strengthening the degree of natural immunity, the natural body defenses and the overall vitality of the individual

“There is no healing force outside of the human body”

Dr. Issac Jennings

“The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will interest their patients in the care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease.”

Thomas Edison

“In a state of health, people are shut off from the invasion of germs”

Louis Pasteur

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About the Author: Keith Wassung is a nationally known author and speaker in the field of health education and research. He is available for speaking engagements and can be contacted at: Riverhorse Publishing, 104 Berkeley Square Lane, Ste. 6 Goose Creek, SC 29445 (866) 642-0916. Visit his website at www.riverhorsepubl.com

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