**Lack of new antibiotics threatens global efforts to contain drug-resistant infections**

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Declining private investment and lack of innovation in the development of new antibiotics are undermining efforts to combat drug-resistant infections, says the World Health Organization (WHO).

Two new reports prepared by WHO reveal a weak pipeline for antibiotics. The 60 products in development (50 antibiotics and 10 biologics) bring little benefit over existing treatments and very few target the most critical resistant bacteria (Gram-negative bacteria).

“Never has the threat of drug resistance been more immediate and the need for solutions more urgent,” says Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO. “Numerous initiatives are underway to reduce resistance, but we also need countries and the pharmaceutical industry to step up and contribute with sustainable funding and innovative new medicines.”

Of the 50 antibiotics in the pipeline, 32 target WHO priority pathogens but the majority have only limited benefits when compared to existing antibiotics. Only two of these are active against the multi-drug resistant Gram-negative bacteria, which are spreading rapidly and require urgent solutions.

Gram-negative bacteria can cause severe and often deadly infections that pose a particular threat for people with weak or not yet fully developed immune systems, including new-borns, ageing populations, people undergoing surgery and cancer treatment.

There are substances in early stages of testing which are more innovative, but it will take years before they reach patients.

The reports also found that research and development for antibiotics is primarily driven by small- or medium-sized enterprises with large pharmaceutical companies continuing to exit the field.

Moreover, new treatments alone will not be sufficient to combat the threat of drug resistance. WHO works with countries and partners to improve infection prevention and control and to foster appropriate use of existing and future antibiotics.