

# IVAA statement at the EAAD 2018

By 2050, 10 million lives a year could be at risk due to the rise of antimicrobial resistant bacteria, unless the global health community takes serious steps to curtail current trends<sup>1</sup>. Worryingly, national, European and international strategies to tackle this issue are insufficient as, for example, the average consumption rates of antibiotics during the years 2011-2014 remain unchanged<sup>2</sup>. These strategies focus mainly on prevention (e.g., vaccines), better diagnostics and less and appropriate use of antimicrobials, while patients are increasingly looking for complementary medical approaches and want to be part of the decisions concerning their health. There is then a gap between the kind of healthcare patients look for and what health ministries, institutions and universities actually offer.

There is promising evidence that antibiotic prescription rates of anthroposophic doctors are dramatically lower than those of conventional physicians, while ensuring positive patient satisfaction as well as equivalent outcomes on symptom relief and safety. In a cross-sectional study including 6,630 children, 41.6% of children with anthroposophic lifestyle never had antibiotics compared to only 15.1% of reference children.

Anthroposophic approach to health focusses on keeping patients healthy by looking at risk factors for illness in individual's lifestyle, background, or community; it strengthens self-healing and self-regulating ability of the human organism to cope with diseases and it involves lower prescription rates of antimicrobials when antibiotics are not absolutely needed by providing treatment with natural medicinal products and by adequate fever management. Anthroposophic medicine could thus meaningfully contribute to reduce antibiotic prescriptions and use and stimulate appropriate use of antibiotics.

Anthroposophic medicine is a pioneer of integrative medicine in the EU, bringing together the best of conventional medicine with anthroposophic medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine and other Complementary and Alternative approaches. Anthroposophic hospitals in Germany, Switzerland and other countries are best practice-models for integrative hospitals since the 1970's, showing a much lower use of antibiotics due to complementary treatment facilities for acute infections. AM strategies against AMR are particularly interesting from a public health point of view because of their cost-effectiveness and efficacy.

Given the magnitude of the AMR problem, all promising options must be considered by decision-makers, to keep citizens – and the whole society – healthy. Therefore:

1. Anthroposophic medicine and other CAM / integrative medicine approaches should be part of national and European strategies and policies to tackle AMR;
2. Research on this field should be further supported;
3. ECDC should allow for interaction between different medical approaches, conventional and unconventional, on AMR;

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<sup>1</sup> [https://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/160525\\_Final%20paper\\_with%20cover.pdf](https://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/160525_Final%20paper_with%20cover.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Smith E, Lichten CA, Taylor J, et al. Evaluation of the EC Action Plan Against the Rising Threats from Antimicrobial Resistance. 2016.

4. A space for a sustainable and meaningful dialogue between civil society, ECDC and institutions should be created;
5. Evaluating and further developing the potential of CAM / integrative medicine prevention and treatment strategies in symptom relief and reducing antibiotic use should be prioritized and supported;
6. Knowledge / expertise of anthroposophic and other CAM experts regarding risk management and reduction of prescription - and consumption rates should be shared through appropriate information tools;
7. Public education on reducing antibiotic use should include suggestion of evidence-based CAM approaches as alternative.