

15th November 2018

Statement

Vaccines Europe welcomes the 2018 European Antibiotic Awareness Day

Vaccines Europe recognises the enormous and decade long commitment of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the European Commission to raising awareness about the global problem of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), in the European population. This major public health threat has made the EU and other countries worldwide take certain steps in order to protect their citizens from dangerous bacteria.

Vaccines can help in a number of ways. Existing vaccines reduce the use of antibiotics by preventing infection in the first place or by avoiding the inappropriate prescription of antibiotics for viral infections (e.g. influenza). They also prevent cases of bacterial infections that sometimes occur on top of vaccine-preventable viral illnesses or from resistant bacteria strains (i.e. pneumococcal).

New vaccines will play a critical role in preventing infection with multi-drug resistant bacteria, such as *Staph. aureus* and extra-intestinal pathogenic *E. coli*¹, as well as other pathogens that drive antibiotic use (e.g. tuberculosis).

The 2017 Commission Action Plan on AMR and the Joint Action on AMR and Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs) highlight the important role vaccines have in the fight against AMR^{2 3 4 5 6}. They need strong political support to keep them on the forefront of EU-wide action.

At present, the members of Vaccines Europe are engaged in the development of vaccines against AMR pathogens and HAIs and we believe all stakeholders should participate through the different initiatives as mentioned above. The EU needs to support the development of innovative vaccines against emerging health threats and AMR pathogens, as it is our collective responsibility to contribute to reducing the global impact of AMR. This support ranges from setting up robust, real-time disease and AMR surveillance to ensure that vaccine developers select appropriate pathogens, as well as to enhancing funding for early research in epidemiology and immunology of AMR pathogens and HAI.

Finally, it is important that the EU member states integrate life-course vaccination planning into national action plans for the fight against AMR to further promote the use of vaccines as one of the answers to this global health threat.

¹ The review on Antimicrobial Resistance (Chaired by Jim O'Neill) (February 2016). *Vaccines and alternative approaches: reducing our dependence on antimicrobials*. Available at: https://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/Vaccines%20and%20alternatives_v4_LR.pdf (Accessed: 2nd November 2018)

² Jansen, K. et al. (2018). The role of vaccines in preventing bacterial antimicrobial resistance. *Nature Medicine*. Vol. 24, p. 10–19. doi:10.1038/nm.4465

³ The review on Antimicrobial Resistance (Chaired by Jim O'Neill) (may 2016). *Tackling Drug-Resistant Infections Globally: Final report and recommendations*. Available at: https://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/160518_Final%20paper_with%20cover.pdf (Accessed: 2nd November 2018)

⁴ World Bank (2017) *Drug-Resistant Infections, A Threat to Our Economic Future*. Available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/323311493396993758/final-report> (Accessed: 30th October 2018)

⁵ Sprenger M. (2015). *How to stop antibiotic resistance? Here's a WHO prescription*. Available at: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/commentaries/stop-antibiotic-resistance/en/> (Accessed: 29th October 2018)

⁶ Vaccines Europe (2016). *The role of vaccination in reducing antimicrobial resistance*. Available at: <http://www.vaccineseurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/VE-policy-paper-on-the-role-of-vaccines-in-reducing-AMR-2016-FIN-1.pdf> (Accessed: 29th October 2018)