

**ESBL-producing *Enterobacteriaceae*: alarm calls from Asia**

Abdul Ghafur

Apollo Hospitals, India

Increasing prevalence of Multidrug resistant Gram negative bacteria in the hospitals is a serious global threat. The resistance issue is under evaluated and underreported in the community setting. There is no doubt that ESBL-producing bacterial infections, especially coupled with increasing carbapenem resistance, are of grave concern to the medical world. Asia is the epicentre of Gram negative drug resistance, having the highest prevalence of ESBL producing *Enterobacteriaceae* in the hospitals and in the community. It is already too late to analyse the reasons behind this scenario and take remedial measures. Lack of an effective and implementable antibiotic policy in most countries in the region and inadequate political will to correct the contributing socio economic factors - overcrowding and lack of sanitation- are the cornerstones of this highly undesirable scenario.

What is the solution to this epic challenge?

- Rationalise over the counter(OTC) sale of antibiotics
- Formulate local outpatient antibiotic policies based on the sensitivity profile of community pathogens. Measures should be initiated or augmented to improve laboratory facilities and to increase awareness about MDR bacteria.
- Encourage basic hand hygiene measures among public.
- Re-evaluation of forgotten, less fashionable antibiotics.
- Educate general practitioners on rational antibiotic prescription.
- Pharmaceutical industry should encourage rational prescription.
- Improve sanitation facilities throughout the region.
- Mobilise political will to tackle antimicrobial resistance.
- Pan Asian Network to tackle Antibiotic Resistance.

The purpose of such an initiative should be to mobilise political will to tackle the challenge rather than just to conduct surveillance studies. Medical community alone cannot tackle the menace. We need political commitment and joint measures by all countries in the region.