



Symposium 11.2

The Ear, Nose and Throat: Resistance Hideouts

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It is recognized that spread of antibiotic-resistant respiratory pathogens is facilitated by antibiotics, mainly through frequent contacts of children in crowded environments (i.e. day care centers or crowded facilities) in the community. However, the normal flora is also the source of respiratory tract infections such as acute otitis media (AOM), sinusitis or pneumonia. Recent series of studies that will be described in the presentation have clearly shown that although the choice of appropriate antibiotic drug will eradicate the causing pathogen from the site of infection, it will, simultaneously, select for a new pathogen responsible for a reduced clinical response to the correct antibiotic treatment (superinfection) or for a subsequent new infection, often with an antibiotic-resistant pathogen.

Thus, the overall benefits provided by antibiotic treatment to the individual have to be weighed not only against the contribution of such a treatment to the spread of antibiotic resistance in the community, but also the risk of reduced response to current or subsequent infections, especially in young children who are prone to recurrent respiratory infections.