

Project update

Linking the fight against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) with the attainment of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and better Pandemic Preparedness and Response (PPR) – AMR People Centred Approach

Written by Riko KIMOTO, Asia-Europe Foundation Public Health Network (ASEF PHN), asefphn@asef.org

Executive statement

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is one of the top global public health and development threats that no country can resolve in isolation. After the UNHLM on AMR in 2016, numerous countries developed AMR National Action Plans (NAPs) to combat this global health threat. However, only 27% of countries, irrespective of economic status, have reported effective implementation of their NAPs, with 11% allocating funding for AMR NAPs in their national budgets in 2023. This lack of progress is concerning, as it leaves us vulnerable to the devastating effects of AMR across the life course – from newborn babies to the elderly. While the One Health approach is instrumental in addressing the various drivers of this global threat, this update focuses on the progress made in the human health sector, namely in Indonesia and Thailand, using WHO's People-Centred-Approach on AMR, showing that addressing AMR while strengthening the health system towards achieving UHC is important and possible. These examples encourage other countries of all economic levels to consider this new approach.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in an Era of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and Pandemics

ASEF has been at the forefront of advocating for the crucial link between addressing AMR while achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Our journey began in 2018, when we hosted a “High-level meeting on UHC: UHC as a tool to combat infectious disease” with a special focus on AMR¹ supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA Japan). Building on the consensus reached at this meeting, ASEF organised the follow-up conference “UHC in an Era of AMR and Pandemics”² with MOFA Japan and the AMR Clinical Reference Centre of Japan in 2023. The conference showcased the benefits of tackling AMR through the health systems while progressing towards UHC, leading to enhanced Pandemic Preparedness and Response (PPR). As a result of our efforts, ASEF received a proposal from WHO for an initiative titled “Addressing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) by strengthening primary health care (PHC): Piloting the AMR People Centred Approach in priority countries”. This initiative tests the WHO's People-Centred Approach (PCA) to addressing AMR in human health and the core package of interventions at the PHC level of implementation.

What is the People Centred Approach (PCA) to addressing AMR?

PCA recognizes and aims to address the challenges and health system barriers people face when accessing health services to prevent, diagnose and treat (drug-resistant) infections. It puts people and their needs at the centre of the AMR response and guides policy-makers in taking programmatic and comprehensive actions to mitigate AMR in line with a core package of 13 AMR interventions. These interventions are based on four pillars and two foundational steps that are critical to overcome barriers faced by people and health systems in addressing AMR. The four pillars are: (1) prevention of infections; (2) access to essential health services; (3) timely, accurate diagnosis; and (4) appropriate, quality-assured treatment. The pillars are supported by the two foundational steps: effective governance, awareness and education; and strategic information through surveillance and research. Building and adding on to the objectives of the Global action plan on AMR, the 13 core interventions and accompanying priority actions are designed to address AMR in a programmatic manner that puts people, their needs and equitable access to health services at the centre of the AMR response in the community, in primary care, secondary and tertiary care, and at national and/or subnational level, linking with health systems strengthening efforts.

(Executive summary, *People-centred approach to addressing antimicrobial resistance in human health: WHO core package of interventions to support national action plans*, accessed on 5 June 2024).

¹ High-level Meeting: Universal Health Coverage as a Tool to Combat Infectious Diseases - Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

² ASEF-PHN_UHC-in-an-Era-of-AMR_2023_Report.pdf

30 May 2024, Geneva, Switzerland

Linking the Global and Local AMR Response with the attainment of UHC and Better PPR – AMR People Centred Approach

FAHRL



Dr Sarah PAULIN-DESCHENEAUX
World Health Organization



Dr Nienke BRUINSMA
World Health Organization



Dr Yanti Herman, SH, MH.Kes
Director of Health Quality Service,
Ministry of Health, Republic of Indonesia



Dr Narong APHIKULVANICH
Food and Drug Administration (FDA),
Thailand



Dr Malin GRAPE
Ambassador on AMR, Swedish
Ministry of Health and Social Affairs



Dr Norio OHMAGARI
National Centre for Global Health
and Medicine (NCGM), Japan

WELCOME ADDRESS



Amb Toru MORIKAWA
Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

MODERATOR



Ms Riko KIMOTO
Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

ASEF PHN, with AMR Clinical Reference Centre, National Centre for Global Health and Medicine (NCGM) Japan, hosted a side event during the 77th World Health Assembly (WHA77). The full-house event was a testament to the progress made in Indonesia and Thailand, showcasing the high potential of the PCA core package of interventions to tackle AMR. The event also provided a practical understanding of how this unique approach is being implemented in countries, and its significant contribution to the health system strengthening and pandemic preparedness and response capacity, underlining its broader impact beyond AMR mitigation.

“I strongly support adoption of a People-Centred Approach (PCA) for AMR interventions at the PHC level. PCA improves patient outcomes through the patient journey. It empowers people’s awareness on AMR, improves Infection Prevention Control, enhances access to diagnosis, treatment and adherence including appropriate use of antimicrobials. PHC is the first entry point of health services by citizens. To address AMR, interventions should be integrated to all level of health systems: primary, secondary, and tertiary care. AMR interventions must cover public and private healthcare facilities.”

Dr Narong APHIKULVANICH,

Secretary General,
Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Ministry of Public Health Thailand

Key messages from the side event

The discussion underscored the crucial findings from the two country missions conducted in Indonesia and Thailand, which provided insights critical to our collective understanding and guiding our future actions.

- **PCA places people at the centre of the AMR narrative:** By using the PCA AMR people journey as a starting point to design a core package of AMR interventions, the PCA helps to humanize the AMR response and makes it more understandable for policy makers.
- **PCA adaptation guides us towards comprehensive NAP implementations:** The PCA core package of interventions works as a guide for all countries to advance the implementation of AMR NAP in human health. It facilitates examining the country reality through a health systems assessment and then identifies a realistic starting point for the necessary actions that considers the interdependencies of interventions and a strong focus on “prevention first.”

Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

31 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
119595 Singapore



- **With own resources, sustainable implementation is possible:** By aligning AMR mitigation strategies with PHC, the implementation of AMR interventions can leverage existing health systems efforts and health sector financing. This approach empowers countries to utilise their own resources effectively and ensures sustainability.
- **Involvement of different stakeholders within human health:** PCA enables us to identify the different technical teams in human health who are part of PHC. By engaging in detailed discussions with these stakeholders, it opens an avenue for comprehensive coordination, collaboration and innovative solutions.
- **PCA is applicable to all countries:** Regardless of the economic status, PCA is a universally applicable tool to advance the AMR agenda in human health, as endorsed by the speakers from Japan and Sweden during this event. Implementing the PCA in countries in close alignment with the PHC strategies and building health systems will ensure sustainability, enhance country-level accountability, and help avoid the challenges of specific donor-driven AMR initiatives in the long term.

The results of these pilot case studies in Indonesia and Thailand will help the WHO develop guidance on mainstreaming AMR interventions into PHC strengthening efforts, and this will be the basis for the WHO's strategic and operational priorities for 2025-2035.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our deep appreciation to all our speakers, Dr Sarah PAULIN-DESCHENAUX and Dr Nienke BRUINSMA, AMR Division – WHO Headquarters, Dr Narong APHIKULVANICH, Secretary General, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Ministry of Public Health Thailand, Dr Malin GRAPE, Ambassador on AMR, Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, and Dr Norio OHMAGARI, Director, AMR Clinical Reference Center, National Centre for Global Health and Medicine (NCGM), Japan for their invaluable contribution that made this side event possible. We are also grateful for the video recording from dr Yanti HERMAN, SH, MH. Kes, Director of Health Quality Service, Ministry of Health, Republic of Indonesia. This project would not have been possible without the collective efforts of WHO, especially the team led by Mr Anand BALACHANDRAN – Unit Head, AMR National Action Plans and Monitoring, Surveillance, Prevention and Control Department, AMR Division. We express our sincere gratitude for the collaboration.



ASEF PHN is funded by the Government of Japan.

Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

31 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
119595 Singapore



References/more information

1. Antimicrobial resistance: accelerating national and global responses WHO strategic and operational priorities to address drug-resistant bacterial infections in the human health sector, 2025–2035 Report by the Director-General
https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB154/B154_13-en.pdf
2. People-centred approach to addressing antimicrobial resistance in human health: WHO core package of interventions to support national action plans.
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240082496>
3. Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in an Era of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and Pandemics:
https://asef.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ASEF-PHN_UHC-in-an-Era-of-AMR_2023_Report.pdf
4. Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as a Tool to Combat Infectious Diseases, with a particular focus on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)
<https://asef.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ASEF-Tokyo-Report.pdf>

Publication details: ©Asia-Europe Foundation Public Health Network, June 2024.