

Questions raised on Antibiotics - May 2014

Antibiotics

Health

14th May 2014



Mike Freer (Finchley and Golders Green, Conservative)

To ask the [Secretary of State](#) for Health how much funding his Department has allocated for antibiotic related research in each of the last five years.



Daniel Poulter (The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health; Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, Conservative)

The usual practice of the Department's National Institute for Health Research ([NIHR](#)) is not to allocate funds for expenditure on particular topics: research proposals in all areas compete for the funding available.

The NIHR funds a wide range of research relating to infection, antibiotics and antimicrobial resistance ([AMR](#)). This includes over £4.9 million invested annually in translational research in infection in its Biomedical Research Centres, in addition to research funded through the [Health Technology Assessment](#) programme and Programme Grants for Applied Research.

Two new NIHR Health Protection Research Units focusing on healthcare associated infections and AMR will receive total funding of £7.4 million over five years. These units are partnerships between universities and [Public Health England](#).

The NIHR is also running a themed call on AMR research across eight different funding programmes. Successful research bids will be announced between summer 2014 and spring 2015.

Business of the House

10:36 am

8th May 2014



Julian Sturdy (York Outer, Conservative)

Following the question from my hon. Friend [Jeremy Lefroy](#), may I add my voice to the calls for a debate on the findings of the [World Health Organisation's](#) report on the global issue of antibiotic resistance? It concluded that antibiotic resistance is no longer a prediction for the future; it is happening right now in every region of the world and has the potential to affect anyone in any country.



Andrew Lansley (The Leader of the House of Commons ; South Cambridgeshire, Conservative)

My hon. Friend is right, and I know of his interest in the matter. This relates to our use of antibiotics not only in human health, but in animal health and how they interact. It is very important to get both right. He will understand from my previous answer that I hope we will take an international lead in trying to achieve a greater effect against anti-microbial resistance in future.



Jeremy Lefroy (Stafford, Conservative)

Yesterday at [Prime Minister's](#) questions the subject was raised of the deeply worrying lack of a pipeline of new antibiotics, owing to market failure. May we have a debate on how the UK, perhaps through the [Department of Health](#) and the Department for [International Development](#), can take the lead in a global initiative to support the development of new antibiotics, similar to that which has been so successful in producing new malaria drugs?



Andrew Lansley (The Leader of the House of Commons ; South Cambridgeshire, Conservative)

My hon. Friend is right. The [Prime Minister](#) rightly stressed the importance of this, which he has discussed with the chief medical officer directly. The chief medical officer made an important report on the subject, in addition to her annual report. Last year we published the UK's five-year anti-microbial resistance plan. That is world-leading, but it would be better if we were able to work with others.

The [World Health Organisation's](#) report gives us the basis on which to work with others at stimulating the necessary research to develop new antibiotics. If we can make sure that we use antibiotics more sensibly in the meantime, that will prolong far into the future the effective use of the existing supply of antibiotics, the stocks available and the kinds of antibiotics available at present.

Engagements

Oral Answers to Questions — Prime Minister

11:30 am

7th May 2014



Zac Goldsmith (Richmond Park, Conservative)

The chief medical officer warned last month that we are misusing antibiotics to such an extent that we risk returning, in just a matter of years, to a 19th-century environment where routine operations carry a grave risk of death. A couple of days ago, the **World Health Organisation** issued a similar warning, saying that we are hurtling towards the post-antibiotic age. On that basis, it is surely madness to continue to allow so many antibiotics to be used on our factory farms—about half the total use in this country—when we know that that contributes to resistance.



David Cameron (The Prime Minister; Witney, Conservative)

My hon. Friend raises an extremely serious problem, which is global in its nature and could have unbelievably bad consequences in terms of anti-microbial resistance leading to quite minor ailments not being properly treatable. One of the problems is that the way research is done currently by pharmaceutical companies

is not necessarily bringing forward new antibiotics in the way that we need or solving this problem. I have met the chief medical officer to discuss this. There are a number of steps that we can take here in the UK and working with other countries, and I hope to say something about it soon.