Antimicrobial resistance is a serious global health problem specially in resource poor countries and India is not an exception. World Health Organization (WHO) as well as Government of India has made strategies for containment of Antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Antimicrobial Resistance is the result of environmental and behavioral factors. Indiscriminate use of antimicrobials, laxity in enforcement of existing laws and lack of awareness are the main causes of AMR in India. Indian Government has taken several steps to improve pattern of use and stringent enforcement of existing regulations. Indian Pharmaceutical Association (IPA) and Commonwealth Pharmacists’ Association (CPA) have taken up the issue of generating awareness on containment of AMR during last few years. Recently CPA and IPA has presented their activities in Antibiotic Guardian Conference and Awards 2018 organized by Public Health England, UK at London, where the poster of CPA was recognized as “highly commended poster” and the IPA Poster was shortlisted for presenting at the final round. Several health care agencies and associations from UK and other Commonwealth countries have presented posters in this conference. Both the posters are published in this issue of the Drug Information Bulletin as per the request of Dr. Rao Vadlamudi, President, and Commonwealth Pharmacists’ Association.

Commonwealth Pharmacists Association

WHO ARE THE CPA?
The CPA is a UK-based charity whose membership base consists of National Pharmacy Associations of the Commonwealth. As an affiliated organisation of the Commonwealth, the CPA has a key advocacy role for the profession at government level. The mission of the CPA is to help support the better use of medicines throughout the Commonwealth with a vision of improving the health and well being of the people of the Commonwealth.

AMR AND THE COMMONWEALTH
The Commonwealth encompasses 1/4 of the world’s land mass and 5% of the global population, including many lower middle income countries (LMICs) (Figure 1). Deaths attributed to AMR are particularly marked in LMICs, making this issue an important focus for health in the Commonwealth.

A global action plan on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) was endorsed at the World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2015, reflecting the global agreement on the profound threat AMR poses to human health. In response to this, all 52 Commonwealth countries signed the UN declaration in 2016.

Analysis of published responses by Commonwealth countries in the WHO first open self assessment survey (2016-17) revealed:

- 64% had developed an AMR action plan
- 27% had an action plan under development
- 29% had no plan

Of these, more than 85% of high income and lower middle income countries had an action plan or were in the process of developing one, compared to 65% of upper-middle and low income countries.

The Commonwealth provides the ideal network to share good practice and support the development of action plans in less resources rich settings. The Commonwealth Health and Education Unit has developed a Policy Brief on AMR to help support member nations in tackling this global threat: https://www.corporatehealthhub.net.

WAAW 2016 CAMPAIGN WORK
For World Antibiotic Awareness Week (WAAW) 2016 the CPA engaged with members to raise awareness of AMR, and asked them to complete a survey to investigate the situation regarding regulation and enforcement of regulation around supply of antibiotics in the Commonwealth. Amongst other things, this revealed that although 62% had legislations preventing sale of antibiotics without a prescription, only 51% of the responding organizations stated that the legislation was abided by in their country.

The survey also showed that 76% of respondents were aware of WAAW, however only 30% of the national organizations had plans for WAAW 2016, so it was suggested that one of their planned activities could be to become an Antibiotic Guardian and for individuals or groups to send in photos with their certificates for display on the CPA website and social media channels (Figure 2). The CPA also created an Antibiotic Guardian flyer, letter to member organizations, sample press release and a portal of resources on the CPA website to support members in raising awareness and developing their own campaigns. During this week the CPA were also able to co-host a discussion of the challenges of tackling AMR in the Commonwealth on the Health Hub.

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RAISING AMR AWARENESS IN THE COMMONWEALTH

In the run up to WAAW 2017 the CPA held 2 webinars:
(1) To raise awareness of the role of the pharmacist in tackling AMR
(2) To give individuals and organizations ideas of how to run their own campaigns.

Members organizations around the Commonwealth were also requested to:
1. Register activities they had planned on the Antibiotic Guardian website
2. Complete and distribute a vacancies survey (in collaboration with the international pharmaceutical federation – intph)
3. Send a short video message around the theme of WAAW 2017 ‘Seek advice from your healthcare professional before taking antibiotics’. These can be viewed on our website: www.corporatehealthhub.net
4. Send on a Mailchimp to all their members containing 3 calls to actions:
   i. Complete a survey on perceptions of AMR and share with networks
   ii. Become an Antibiotic Guardian
   iii. Consider running own campaign using tool kit/webinar on our website for ideas/resources

We actively tweeted/retweeted appropriate WAAW posts during this week.

FUTURE AMR WORK
The work that the CPA have carried out since 2016 has led to submission of abstracts and articles to raise awareness of AMR, as well as enabling the use of data to strengthen advocacy efforts at government level. A significant project to support pharmacist-led antimicrobial stewardship initiatives in 4 African nations in collaboration with another UK charity is currently being worked up. The CPA’s WAAW 2016 Campaign is also under development.

Figure 1: Location of Commonwealth countries

Figure 2: Some of the Antibiotic Guardians around the Commonwealth
IPA poster at Antibiotic Guardian Conference and Awards 2018 organized by Public Health England, UK at London
Public notice issued by CDSCO for comments on proposed inclusion of all implantable medical devices and other high end equipment under the purview of sec. 3(b) (iv) of the D & C Act.

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR COMMENTS ON PROPOSED NOTIFICATION

Subject: Proposal to include all implantable medical devices and other high end equipment under the purview of Section 3 (b) (iv) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 as Medical Devices regarding.

In pursuance of sub-clause (iv) of clause (b) of Section 3 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 (23 of 1940), Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) in its 79th meeting held on 15.05.2018, deliberated and recommended for the proposal to specify the following medical devices under the definition of drug.

1) All implantable medical devices
2) CT scan equipment
3) MRI equipment
4) Defibrillators
5) Dialysis machine
6) PET equipment
7) X-Ray machine
8) Bone marrow cell separator

This will be notified in the official Gazette of India and will come into effect after a period of twelve months from the date of its publication. All the stakeholders are requested to forward their comments/suggestions within 21 days of issue of this notice prior to finalisation of the notification, through email at dcigme@nic.in and dtabcdsco@gmail.com or in hard copies to the O/o DCG(II), CDSCO, FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi-110002.

(Dr. S. Eswara Reddy)
Drugs Controller General (India)

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