

# Eurobarometer on antimicrobial resistance highlights areas for action

Eurosurveillance editorial team (eurosurveillance@ecdc.europa.eu)<sup>1</sup>

1. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Stockholm, Sweden

## Citation style for this article:

Citation style for this article: Eurosurveillance editorial team. Eurobarometer on antimicrobial resistance highlights areas for action. Euro Surveill. 2010;15(15):pii=19540. Available online: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19540>

This article has been published on 15 April 2010

On 9 April 2010, the European Commission published the results of a Eurobarometer on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) which demonstrate the need for further progress on the issue in the European Union (EU) [1]. The report highlights public attitudes towards the use of antibiotics which are of concern. Although almost 40% of the participating Europeans remember having received information advising them not to take antibiotics unnecessarily, the results of the Eurobarometer indicate that citizens need to be better informed about their use.

This second Eurobarometer on antimicrobial resistance was carried out at the end of 2009 and follows on from a survey that was conducted in the EU in 2002 [2]. The report is structured around the use of antibiotics, perceptions regarding the use of antibiotics and an analysis of awareness raising efforts.

## Results for the use of and perceptions about antibiotics

Concerning the use of and perceptions about antibiotics, 40% of respondents said they had taken antibiotics in the past year. However, over a third had taken them for a viral infection like a cold or influenza. Ninety-five per cent of these had obtained antibiotics through a medical prescription and/or administration by a medical practitioner. Moreover, 53% of the surveyed think that antibiotics are able to kill viruses. This misconception is particularly common in the 15 to 24-year-olds. Almost two-thirds of the respondents (62%) said that the information they had received had not changed their views on antibiotics.

## Community strategy against antimicrobial resistance

The EU has put in place a Community strategy against antimicrobial resistance [3], supported by initiatives to encourage the prudent use of these substances in human medicine [4]. To tackle misconceptions surrounding antibiotics, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), in cooperation with Member States, organises the European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD) every year since 2008, to raise

awareness on the appropriate use of antibiotics. The 2010 EAAD will be held on 18 November 2010.

## References

1. European Commission. Antimicrobial Resistance. Eurobarometer 338/Wave 72.5 – TNS Opinion & Social. Luxembourg, 2010. Available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/antimicrobial\\_resistance/docs/ebs\\_338\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/antimicrobial_resistance/docs/ebs_338_en.pdf)
2. European Commission. The health of adults in the European Union. Special Eurobarometer 183-3/ Wave 58.2 - European Opinion Research Group EEIG. Luxembourg, 2003. Available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_183\\_3\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_183_3_en.pdf)
3. European Commission. Communication of 20 June 2001, on a Community strategy against antimicrobial resistance [COM(2001) 333 final Volume I - Not published in the Official Journal]. EUR-LEX 52001DC0333. Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52001DC0333:EN:HTML>
4. Council Recommendation of 15 November 2001 on the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in human medicine [COM(2001) 333 final Volume II – Not published in the Official Journal]. EUR-LEX 52001PC0333. Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52001PC0333:EN:HTML>
5. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). About the European antibiotic awareness day. Stockholm, 2010. Available from: <http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/EN/EAAD/Pages/Home.aspx>