

December 20, 2009

Bad Bugs, No Drugs. A Call to Action.

Most healthcare professionals are aware of the public health crisis that is the result of increasing resistance to antibiotics. Today, we have bacteria that are resistant to all available antibiotics, and infections with these bacteria are killing thousands of people.

However, you might not be aware of the frightening twist in the antibiotic resistance problem: the pharmaceutical pipeline for new antibiotics is drying up. The current crisis is the result of a marked decrease in industry research and development for new antibiotics (which are not profitable), government inaction, and the increasing prevalence of resistant bacteria.

Our patients – neonates in intensive care – are among the most vulnerable to mortality when they become infected with one of the "ESKAPE pathogens" - *Enterococcus faecium*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Acinetobacter baumannii*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, and *Enterobacter* species that are rapidly gaining resistance to every antibiotic we have.

For reasons too numerous to list here, the very few new antibiotics that make it through phase 2 and phase 3 clinical trials are failing to get FDA approval. If this situation continues, we will have arrived at the era of the untreatable infection.

Your advocacy participation is urgently needed. You can:

1. Visit the [Policy & Advocacy](#) page of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA). There, by entering your zip code, you can send form letters that succinctly summarize this problem to your 2 Senators and 1 House Member, and urge them to pass legislation to spur new antibiotic discovery. It doesn't get much easier than that.
2. Write letters to the editors of professional journals, newspapers, or other media explaining the dire situation we are in and what needs to be done. Write letters to the FDA demanding that they streamline the drug approval process and incorporate the clinical perspective into drug approval decisions.
3. Learn more by reading the IDSA's recent paper, [Bad Bugs, No Drugs, No Escape](#) or their [whitepaper](#) that describes potential legislative solutions to this problem.
4. Ask your colleagues to join this effort.

We would be interested to hear about your advocacy efforts on behalf of this issue, particularly if you receive a response. Please send your comments to stokowski@cox.net