

## **Minutes of National Interdepartmental AMR Consultative Committee's 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 – 2:30pm – 4:30pm**

**Department of Health, Miesian Plaza, Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2**

### **Attendance**

#### **Chairs**

Ms Rachel Kenna – Chief Nursing Officer- Department of Health & Committee Co-Chair (Chair)  
Professor Breda Smyth – Chief Medical Officer (CMO) – Department of Health & Committee Co-Chair (BS)  
Dr Martin Blake – Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) – Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine & Committee Co-Chair (MB)

#### **Committee Members**

Dr Margaret O'Sullivan – Consultant in Public Health Medicine-Health Protection, HSE National Health Protection Service (MOS)  
Ms Anna Daly – Irish Farmers Association (Alternate for Mr Tomás Bourke) (AD)  
Mr Andy Fanning – Programme Manager, Environmental Protection Agency (Alternate for Ms Aisling O'Connor) (AF)  
Dr Pamela Byrne – CEO, Food Safety Authority of Ireland (PB)  
Dr Olive Smyth – Senior Medical Officer, Health Products Regulatory Authority (Alternate for Dr Lorraine Nolan, CEO, HPRA) (OS)  
Mr John Enright – General Secretary, Irish Creamery and Milk Suppliers Association (JE)  
Ms Niamh Muldoon – Chief Executive Officer, Veterinary Council of Ireland (NM)  
Mr David Graham – Chief Executive Officer, Animal Health Ireland (DG)  
Dr Susanna Frost – Consultant Clinical Microbiologist, Health Protection Surveillance Centre (SF)  
Dr Máirín Boland – National Clinical Lead, Health Threats Preparedness Programme, Health Protection Surveillance Centre (MB)  
Mr Paul McDermott – President, Veterinary Ireland (Alternate for Mr Finbarr Murphy, CEO, Veterinary Ireland) (PMCD)

#### **Department of Health (DoH)**

Dr Laura Dooley – AMR Team, National Patient Safety Office (LD)  
Mr Stephen Kearney – AMR Team, National Patient Safety Office (SK)  
Ms Sarah Delaney – AMR Team, National Patient Safety Office (SD)

#### **Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM)**

Dr June Fanning – Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer (JF)  
Dr Máire McElroy – Senior Superintending Research Officer (MMCE)  
Ms Caroline Garvan – Superintending Veterinary Inspector (CG)  
Ms Rosemarie Slowey – Senior Research Officer (RS)  
Ms Julie Bolton – Veterinary Inspector (JB)

#### **Guest presenters**

Ms Ellen Martin – Senior Antimicrobial Pharmacist – HSE AMRIC– In Person (EM)  
Ms Audrey Lambourn – HSE AMRIC Communications Lead – Virtually for agenda items 4a ii) and iii) (AL)  
Mr Robert Murphy – Research Services Unit, Department of Health – Virtually for agenda items 4a ii) and iii) (RM)  
Dr Elayne Ahern – Department of Psychology, University of Limerick – Virtually for agenda items 4a ii) and iii) (EA)  
Prof Martin Cormican – Consultant Microbiologist at Galway University Hospital and Professor of Bacteriology, School of Medicine, University of Galway – Virtually for agenda item 5 (MC)  
Ms Margaret Culliton – HSE AMRIC Project Manager – Virtually for agenda item 5 (MC)

#### **Apologies**

Dr Eimear Brannigan – HSE AMRIC National Clinical Lead  
Ms Shirley Keane – HSE AMRIC Head of Service

Ms Rosarie Lynch – Head of Clinical Effectiveness and AMR Unit, National Patient Safety Office  
Ms Zara Conlon – Veterinary Inspector, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

## **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting noting that this was the first in person Interdepartmental meeting since before the COVID-19 Pandemic. There have been several changes to the Committee since it last met.

Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee:

- Co-Chair and CMO Professor Breda Smyth
- Dr Eimear Brannigan, HSE AMRIC National Clinical Lead
- Dr Susanna Frost, Consultant Clinical Microbiologist, Health Protection Surveillance Centre
- Dr Máirín Boland, National Clinical Lead, Health Threats Preparedness Programme, Health Protection Surveillance Centre

Chair acknowledged and thanked the following former members of the Committee for their contributions to the Committee:

- Professor Martin Cormican, Former HSE AMRIC Clinical Lead
- Dr Kevin Kelleher, Former HSE Assistant National Director Public Health
- Dr Karen Burns, formerly Consultant Microbiologist, HPSC
- Dr Niamh O'Sullivan, Chairperson, HSE/RCPI Clinical Advisory Group on HCAI
- Ms Brigid Doherty, Public Representative

Chair noted the apologies for the following members:

- Dr Eimear Brannigan – HSE AMRIC National Clinical Lead
- Ms Shirley Keane – HSE AMRIC National Programme Manager (Observer)
- Ms Rosarie Lynch – Head of Clinical Effectiveness and AMR Unit, National Patient Safety Office (Secretariat)
- Ms Zara Conlon – Veterinary Inspector, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Secretariat)

The following change to the DOH Secretariat since the last meeting was also noted:

- Mr Stephen Kearney, Executive Officer, AMR Team, National Patient Safety Office has replaced Mr Austin Cullen, Administrative Officer who formerly worked as part of the AMR Team, National Patient Safety Office.

The attendance of Professor Breda Smyth, Co-Chair and Chief Medical Officer at this, her first meeting of the Committee was acknowledged. June Fanning, Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer was also welcomed to her first meeting.

Chair invited attendees around the table to introduce themselves.

## **2. Minutes**

Minutes from 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Interdepartmental AMR Consultative Committee were adopted.  
Actions have been completed with the exception of one- next agenda item relates.

## **3. Conflict of Interest Forms**

Conflict of Interest forms were circulated to Committee Members. Any outstanding forms were to be completed and returned to the Secretariat (DOH/DAFM) at the end of the meeting.

## **4. iNAP2 Updates**

### **4.a. i) Update provided on iNAP2 Midterm Review from Human Health perspective – Dr Laura Dooley (DOH)**

- iNAP2 was published November 2021. It includes 90 actions related to Human Health across the five strategic objectives.

- A midterm review of the human health actions was planned for Q1 2023 in order to capture any learning from the COVID-19 Pandemic response which had a significant impact on the delivery of health and social care services, and underlined the importance of good infection prevention and control.
- The purpose of the Review is to provide an opportunity to review progress to date and to sense-check and specify timelines for the remaining actions.
- External stakeholder engagement was conducted in December 2022.
- Next steps are to complete the analysis of external stakeholders' feedback; engage with internal DOH stakeholders; and hold a workshop with HSE AMRIC.

Presenters for item 4.a. ii) and iii) joined the meeting virtually and were welcomed and introduced by the Chair.

#### **4.a. ii) DOH Behavioural Change Research - Robert Murphy (DOH) & Dr Elayne Murphy (UL)**

- This item provides a progress update and preliminary results for the project, *A systematic review and meta-analysis of the effectiveness of behaviour change initiatives to reduce sub-optimal antimicrobial prescribing and consumption*, which is being undertaken under iNAP2 Action 5-05: Review the evidence base for behavioural change initiatives to promote optimal antimicrobial prescribing and reduce antimicrobial consumption.
- It is a collaboration between the Research Services Unit DOH and the Department of Psychology in University of Limerick. The contribution of Ailish Kelly, Research Services Unit DOH to the study was acknowledged.
- Research questions are:
  - What is the evidence of the effectiveness of interventions to reduce antimicrobial consumption and/or use within the community in OECD countries?
  - What typology of interventions are being used to reduce antimicrobial consumption and/or antimicrobial prescription rates across the OECD?
- Approach taken was to compile evidence from randomised control trials (RCTs) on the effectiveness of behavioural change interventions in reducing antimicrobial use through the reduction of antimicrobial consumption and/or antimicrobial prescription rates.
- Advantages of RCTs – population randomly split/outcomes independently measured.
- Meta-analysis – statistical combination of results from 2+ studies
- Research team have identified relevant studies, but some did not answer the relevant questions.
- Research team have searched peer reviewed databases.
- 32 articles included for inclusion with 61 articles included in overall report.
- Meta-analysis – Antimicrobial prescribing – 24 studies
  - A BCI reduced antimicrobial prescribing by 18%
- Meta-analysis – Antimicrobial consumption – 8 studies
  - A BCI reduced antimicrobial consumption by 54%
- Meta-analysis – Antimicrobial prescriptions dispensed – 4 studies.
  - A behaviour change intervention reduced antimicrobial prescriptions dispensed by 18%

DG raised the disparity between consumption/prescribing.

RM - Research Services Unit advised that the disparity was as a result of the number of studies. This disparity will be examined more closely.

EM- University of Limerick discussed the typology of interventions. Element of patients expecting a prescription when they visit the GP. Need to encourage shared decision making when patients visit the GP.

MOS queried whether the size of a population would affect the results.

EM- University of Limerick noted that greater weighting was given to larger high quality RCTs.

#### **4.a. iii) HSE AMRIC**

##### **HSE AMRIC Antibiotic Quality Improvement Initiative for Community Prescribers – Ellen Martin HSE AMRIC**

- Joint initiative between HSE AMRIC and HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Service.

- Since September 2019, over 3,000 GPs have received individualised quarterly reports on their antibiotic prescribing.
- 80/90% of antimicrobial use is in the community.
- A Green/Red list of antibiotics has been provided to assist community prescribers in choosing an antibiotic which has fewer side effects and less likely to lead to resistant infections.
- An educational nudge is provided with every report that the GPs receive.
- Reports have been refined over a period of time with key stakeholder involved like the Antimicrobial Consumption Subgroup.
- There has been a 14% increase in the use of Green antibiotics.
- Data is from Primary Care Reimbursement Services patients only, private prescriptions not included.
- During the COVID-19 Pandemic less prescriptions were issued, prescribing rates returning to pre-Pandemic levels.
- The focus of the messaging is around the rate of prescribing and how to reduce it.
- Some of the key enablers/drivers are Antimicrobial Pharmacists/Point Prevalence Studies/Webinars/Antimicrobial Prescribing Guidelines.
- HSE AMRIC share these messages across pharmacists.
- ECDC indicator on community prescribing – Ireland showing a decrease.

CMO asked if this was currently a project or is ongoing.

EM advised that this now embedded in practice. Reports are online and HSE AMRIC continue to work with Primary Care Reimbursement Services

MB noted that this was a nice initiative using data that was already available.

RK noted that 3000 reports to GPs was excellent and the addition of the education nudges very useful and acknowledged that significant resources were required to keep this on track.

EM advised the meeting that all of the education nudges used previously were available on the HSE AMRIC webpages. EM also noted that only practices that had 100 medical card patients and above are included in the Green/Red reports.

AL advised the meeting that this involved using already existing structures with the Primary Care Reimbursement Services.

PB noted that identifying the key drivers was essential. The behaviour of consumers (expecting a prescription) needed to change. Need to also change the behaviour of consumers around the purchasing of antibiotics when abroad where they may be available over the counter.

CMO agreed that the data was positive and is encouraging change in behaviours. Is any data available around prescriptions given but not filled or used? Rapid testing for viral/bacterial infections may reduce prescribing numbers too (mentioned on COVID-19 Advisory Group). CMO also raised the issue of returning/dumping unused medicines.

CG advised that the same pressures to prescribe are evident on the animal health side however new legislation would support the veterinary prescribers by controlling what medication can be prescribed and what cannot. The same diagnostic pressures are seen on the animal health side.

#### **HSE AMRIC RESIST Communications – Audrey Lambourn HSE AMRIC**

- RESIST campaign began with iNAP1 and improving awareness and education around AMR.
- Communications programme developed – a call to action.
- Target the message to specific audience – healthcare workers.
- Needed to make the information understandable and accessible.
- There are lots of resources available to the public on the HSE AMRIC webpages.
- Social media has also played a role.
- Specific campaigns throughout the year – hand hygiene day/antibiotic awareness week/flu season

- HSE AMRIC produce a quarterly newsletter and also have content in Health Matters staff magazine.
- HSE Live and has now become available to the public also, lots of resources here.
- Have also introduced an online interactive programme – Ask the Expert. People from any age group were asked to submit questions around antibiotics. 22 questions received, 10 were answered via a short video response from Dr Paul Ryan, HSE AMRIC GP
- HSE AMRIC introduced a grant initiative, and the pilot ran in late 2021. Aim was to support local Antimicrobial Stewardship teams to promote awareness and knowledge.
- 12 grants were awarded – one of which was to provide RESIST tunics for antimicrobial pharmacists, another was the provision of a PC for the antimicrobial pharmacist which moved from ward to ward with them.
- 6 out of 7 hospital groups and 8 out of 9 community health areas have adopted the RESIST communications programme.
- Planning for a project with two universities is underway to mark European Antibiotic Awareness Day

SF advised the meeting that rapid diagnostics were available in her hospital but would still like patients to attend their GPs and not emergency rooms.

AL noted that point of care testing at GP surgeries may impact significantly on numbers of patients attending.

#### **4.b Update from Animal Health Perspective**

##### **4.b. i) DAFM iNAP2 Update – Caroline Garvan DAFM**

- Under Strategic Objective 1 Raising Awareness, DAFM continues to raise awareness and provide education via webinars, On Farm events, Teagasc/DAFM information days/European Antibiotic Awareness Day.
- DAFM launched a new One Health logo for their stakeholders on European Antibiotic Awareness Day 2022 with the new message: “Use Antibiotics Responsibly” resonating better with farmers.
- Under Strategic Objective 2 to enhance surveillance, DAFM were involved in a DG Santé audit to evaluate the monitoring and reporting of AMR in zoonotic and commensal bacteria in January. The final report is awaited.
- DAFM laboratories have developed the harmonisation of diagnostic panels for mastitis control.
- The occurrence of ESBL in soil has found low levels on farms, the second phase of this survey will include a larger number of farms.
- The National Veterinary Prescribing System is now online and will be legally mandated later in 2023.
- Pig farm usage database – 90% of herds submitting data. The 2020 average use was 114.8mg/kg versus 2022 61.6 mg/kg – a reduction of 46%.
- This indicates that the legislation prohibiting prophylactic use of antimicrobials in feed is helping prevention of this practice and is supporting change.
- HPRA Sales data show there was an 18% increase in 2020 compared to 2019 followed by a 9.7% decrease in 2021 compared to 2020. A further reduction is expected in 2022.
- Farm 2 Fork reduction targets for antibiotics require a 50% drop in sales from 2018 levels across the EU by 2030. IE has proposed a reduction of 5% per annum from 2020 which will give a reduction of 37% by 2030. No sales of polymyxins (colistin) were recorded in 2021 for the first time.
- The European Commission Regulation 2022/1255 legislation designating antimicrobials reserved for treatment of certain infections in humans was published in July 2022. One antiviral which had been previously used as a painkiller in animals in a minority of cases is on the list.
- Under Strategic Objective 3 on disease prevention, Biosecurity assessments have taken place with 91% of pig units completed and 50% have been assessed twice with improvement noticed. Poultry farms have been 100% completed.
- The Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health (TASAH) continues to fund vet visits to farms to improve herd health in many areas.
- The Salmonella control programme is being revised.

- BVD Eradication Programme saw a marked reduction in the number of herds with suspect animals in 2022, decreasing from 369 in 2021 to 294. Testing of the autumn round of BTM samples in 2022 confirmed a continued low prevalence of positive results.
- There has been action to increase participation in the Johnes Control Programme.
- The CellCheck solutions TASAH activity, designed to provide multidisciplinary support to herds wishing to reduce their SCC, will continue into 2023, with additional training of service provided scheduled.
- Calfcare events are also ongoing.
- Under Strategic Objective 4 promoting optimal use of antimicrobials, multispecies guidelines for aquaculture and horse owners have been developed.
- Guidelines for the use of HP-CIAs for mastitis have been developed along with Diagnostic & Therapeutic protocols for PVPs and therapeutic guidance for pig sector.
- DAFM are working with the EPA on Disposal of Antimicrobials policy paper and action plan.
- Under Strategic Objective 5 to Promote Research DAFM are participating in JAMRAI II as the competent authority for Ireland with five affiliate partners and DOH is an associate partner. The work by Dr Donal Sammin and Dr Marie McElroy for this was acknowledged.
- Funding approval will be received by end of 2023 with ten work packages across human, animal and environmental health.
- DAFM have established a One Health AMR Thematic Network which will co-ordinate across the One Health sectors between funding organisations and researchers to reduce duplication of work and avoid fragmentation. The aim is to enhance collaboration and dissemination of scientific outputs to policy makers and stakeholders. A gap analysis to identify key research needs and better direct funding will be undertaken.
- DOH and HRB are represented in the network. Terms of Reference are currently being scoped out. Next meeting is due to take place in April.
- Under iNAP1 a safe food AMU Project to explore the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours to the use of antimicrobials in animal health on the island of Ireland has undertaken. It found that beliefs and attitudes influence behaviour more than legislation and other outside factors and it identified the need for a social-ecological approach to behaviour change.
- The following 7 changes interventions were identified:
  - Reframe how we talk about antimicrobials.
  - Undertake One Health cross-border awareness campaign.
  - Specialist communications for animal health professionals
  - User friendly on farm tools (laminated hygiene checklists)
  - Encourage peer to peer social support.
  - Support farmers to monitor use.
  - Supportive community to champion good antimicrobial stewardship
- Following the learning from this research, a second research project on AMU in farms using motivational interviewing, user friendly tools and a farmer-to-farmer approach is now being undertaken.

## Q&A

- Information re: how on farm inspections and relevant databases provide information for monitoring the legislative change around antibiotics in feed was shared.
- The progress in AMU in the agriculture sector was complemented and the issue of language use: antimicrobials vs antibiotics, and the importance of keeping a coherent message across the One Health sectors was discussed.

## 4.b.ii AMR Surveillance/EUSR on AMR in zoonotic and commensal bacteria findings in animals – Rosemarie Slowey DAFM

- Bacterial isolation – broiler chickens, turkeys, pig and bovine samples.
- This monitoring is done across EU States.
- Very low prevalence of salmonella in Irish poultry.

- Most significant resistance patterns were found in imported chicken meat and domestically produced pigs.
- In 2022, baseline prevalence of AMR in salmonella from Irish pigs was 41%.
- In 2022, AMR in *Campylobacter* was 44.5%.
- Irish resistance patterns for broilers in line with EU average.
- Significant HPCIA resistance in imported chicken meat.
- CIP resistance in *C.jejuni* and *C.coli* highest in broilers and turkeys, respectively.
- Significant levels of ESBL E.coli recorded in turkey and turkey meat.
- ESBL prevalence in pork and beef was extremely low.

#### 4.c Environment Sector Update – Andy Fanning Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- EPA continue to update their Watchlist.
- 14 projects have been funded by the Epa since 2018 (list available if required).
- Gap analysis of environmental AMR underway.
- National Hazardous Waste Management Plan – disposal of medicines. Need relevant stakeholders to devise a national plan to tackle this area.
- EPA State of the Environment paper due in Q1 2024.
- Task for on Emergencies reviewing risks, including AMR.

### 5. One Health Surveillance Report – Professor Martin Cormican & Ms Margaret Culliton

- Next iteration of the report will cover 2017-2018.
- Outlined proposed new layout for the report, which if agreed, will provide a template for future reports.
- Report will cover a two-year cycle.
- Will include more data on the environment and further integration of human and animal data.
- New outline will include Introduction/Antimicrobial Use/Antimicrobial Resistance in Bacteria/AMR Mobile Genetic elements/Discussion – Conclusions.
- An example of the table layouts was provided in the presentation.
- For future reports it would mean updating the relevant tables and text where appropriate.
- This will highlight many gaps and weakness in ability to form a true One Health picture.
- Confirmation needed to see if data to populate tables is available (kg for humans).

CMO agreed that the proposed new approach simplifies the data and makes it easier to populate going forward.

RK asked that the Committee be given time to review the proposal and asked that Committee Members come back to the Secretariat on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March with any obs/comments.

CVO advised that on initial glance the new layout and data included were a good way to move the report forward.

### 6. Date of next meeting

Date for next meeting to be confirmed by DAFM.

	Actions	Organisation
1	Secretariat to circulate COI forms and members to complete and return.	DOH / DAFM / Members
2	Committee Members to review One Health Report update and return obs/comments to DOH by 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	Members
3	DOH to share feedback on report with Prof Cormican	DOH
4	Presentations from Meeting to be shared with Committee	DOH
5	Minutes to be circulated	DoH/DAFM