



# MEPs propose blueprint for safer healthcare

Plenary sessions [19-05-2015 - 13:01]

Press release

**Suggested ways to improve patient safety, including tackling growing resistance to human and veterinary antibiotics, using today's treatments more responsibly and promoting innovation, are set out in a resolution voted on Tuesday. MEPs note that 8 - 12% of patients in EU hospitals suffer adverse events, such as healthcare-related infections, which are implicated in 37,000 deaths a year and place a heavy burden on limited health service budgets.**

"Austerity measures cannot be imposed in such a way that they affect the safety of patients, staff or experts in hospitals", said lead MEP Piernicola Pedicini (EFDD, IT), whose recommendations were approved by 637 votes to 32, with 10 abstentions.

"25,000 citizens die every year in Europe owing to the growing resistance to existing antimicrobials, so we must stimulate research into new types of substances. In the veterinary sector, online sales of antimicrobials and their prophylactic use should be prevented", he added.

## Tight healthcare budgets can hurt patients

MEPs note that the current economic crisis has placed increased pressure on national healthcare budgets, and hence has an impact on patient safety. They call on EU member states to ensure that patient safety is not affected by austerity measures and that healthcare systems remain adequately funded.

## Human antibiotics: diagnose before prescribing

The measures proposed to ensure that antibiotics are used more responsibly include:

- strictly prohibiting their use without prescription,
- requiring a microbiological diagnosis before prescribing antibiotics,
- implementing marketing practices designed to prevent conflicts of interest between producers and prescribers, and
- improving information on the monitoring of antimicrobial consumption and antimicrobial resistance and infection control.

MEPs also urge pharmaceutical companies to invest in developing new antimicrobial agents, and ask the European Commission to consider proposing a "legislative framework" to encourage the development of new antibiotic drugs..

## Veterinary antibiotics: restrict preventive use

MEPs also advocate responsible use of antimicrobials in veterinary medicine, including medicated feed, by allowing their use only for treatment after veterinary diagnosis. Two pieces of legislation on the matter are under discussion in the European Parliament.

The use of veterinary antibiotics should therefore gradually be restricted to therapeutic purposes, by progressively eliminating their use for prophylactic ones. The use of metaphylaxis, i.e. the mass medication of animals to cure sick ones on farms whilst preventing the infection of healthy ones, should also be kept to a minimum, say MEPs.

## Background

Between 8% and 12% of patients in EU hospitals suffer adverse events, almost half of which could be avoided. The commonest healthcare-related adverse events are

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healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), medication-related events and complications arising during or after surgical operations.

*Procedure: Non-legislative resolution*

## Facts

- an estimated 8-12 % of patients in EU hospitals suffer adverse events
- nearly half of these events could be avoided
- improving knowledge of how antibiotics work could encourage people to use them more responsibly
- an estimated 10 million people worldwide will die every year due to antimicrobial resistance by 2050

## Further information

- Adopted text will be available here (click on 19.05.2015): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html>
- Video recording of debate (click on 18.05.2015)  
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/search-by-date>
- Video of the press conference  
: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/other-events/schedule>
- Profile of rapporteur Piernicola Pedicini (EFDD, IT)  
: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/124844/PIERNICOLA\\_PEDICINI\\_home.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/124844/PIERNICOLA_PEDICINI_home.html)
- Procedure file  
: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2014/2207\(INI\)&l=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2014/2207(INI)&l=en)
- Eurobarometer: Patient safety and quality of care  
: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/patient\\_safety/eurobarometers/ebs\\_411\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/patient_safety/eurobarometers/ebs_411_en.htm)

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