

Concerted efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance (with photos)

The Department of Health (DH), the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, today (November 13) jointly opened the two-day Regional Symposium on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in Hong Kong, calling on healthcare professionals and the general public to work together on the safe use of antibiotics to combat AMR.

Under the theme "Fighting AMR – Partnerships in Action", the Symposium has brought together more than 300 experts and partners from public health, human and veterinary medicine, agriculture, food, environment and the pharmaceutical industry to review the latest science and gain insights on how to do better in tackling AMR in unity.

The Symposium also provides a platform for participants to exchange their expertise and experiences with an aim to raising awareness of AMR in the community in the Western Pacific region.

At the opening ceremony today, the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said that AMR poses a global threat to the sustainable development of human medicine, veterinary medicine and food security by reducing available options to treat and prevent bacterial infections, and that the "One Health" approach has been identified as a major element of AMR control and preventive strategies.

"Locally, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has long recognised the growing problem of AMR, and various sectors have been implementing control measures to contain its spread. Following the establishment of the High Level Steering Committee on AMR in June 2016, the Hong Kong Strategy and Action Plan on AMR (2017-2022) was launched in July 2017 to outline the key areas, objectives and actions to contain the growing threat of AMR in Hong Kong.

"The Antibiotic Stewardship Programme in Primary Care rolled out last year with a view to further improving local antibiotics prescribing behaviour and educating patients on their proper use, has received promising feedback from family doctors, while the Interhospital Multi-disciplinary Programme on Antimicrobial ChemoTherapy (IMPACT)'s mobile application developed by the DH and its partners obtained the Interactive Media Award 2018 for outstanding achievement in healthcare and education category," said Professor Chan.

Also addressing the ceremony, the Director of Health, Dr Constance Chan, emphasised that global collaboration and a multi-sectoral "One Health" approach are essential to tackle AMR. Noting that new drug development is not the only solution for AMR, she said that the value of surveillance, efforts in optimising antibiotic use in human and animals, and the impact of

infection control and awareness-raising campaigns cannot be underestimated.

Dr Chan added that Hong Kong has been working hard to strengthen surveillance on antibiotic use as well as monitoring the AMR situation in the health and agricultural sectors, so as to perform targeted actions and identify effective measures to combat AMR.

At the Symposium, world-renowned speakers have been invited to share their expertise and experience in translating their AMR action plans into action. Speakers include, amongst others, the Honorary Professor of Economics at the University of Manchester and Author of the Review on AMR of the United Kingdom, Lord O'Neill; the Lead of AMR Surveillance of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Carmem Pessoa-Silva; and the Chief Veterinary Officer of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Dr Juan Lubroth.

The Symposium is one of the major events taking place in conjunction with World Antibiotic Awareness Week (WAAW) 2018 from November 12 to 18. In parallel with WAAW 2018, healthcare professionals are again requested to refer to the guidelines on the use and choice of antibiotics, while patients should strictly adhere to doctors' instructions and should not use antibiotics indiscriminately. For more information on these issues, please visit the [WHO's page on WAAW 2018](#) and [page of the DH's Centre for Health Protection](#).

