



GHA Antimicrobial Strategy 2025

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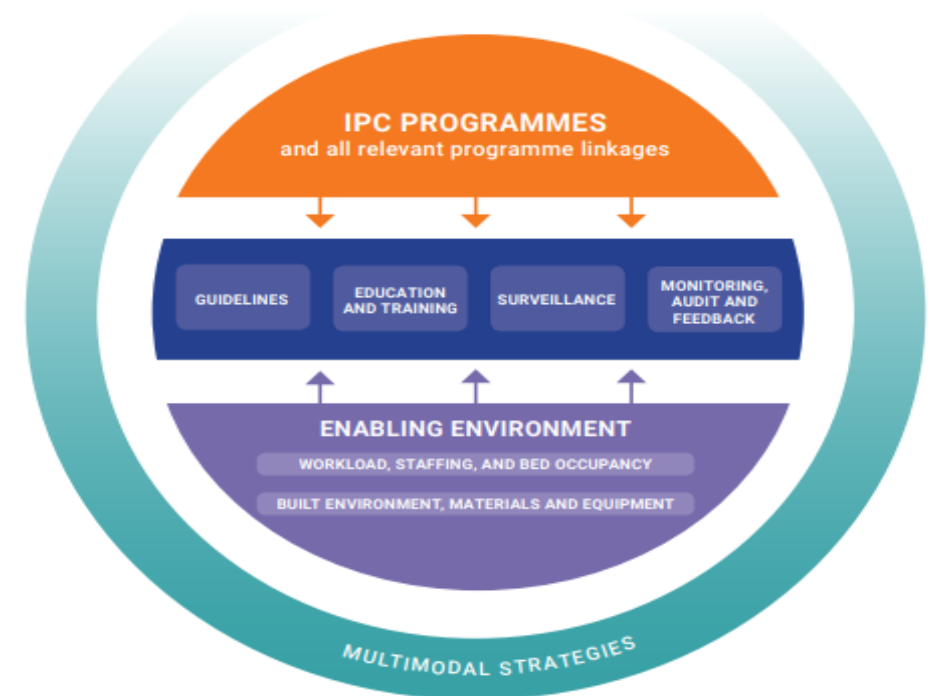
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Antimicrobial stewardship

- The following slide deck describes the GHA approach to addressing antimicrobial stewardship, as described in the [World Health Organisation](#) report: minimum requirements for infection control programmes
- The GHA have adopted the definition of AMR stewardship as defined by Dellit et al (2007):

‘The primary goal of antimicrobial stewardship is to optimise clinical outcomes while minimizing unintended consequences of antimicrobial use, including toxicity, the selection of pathogenic organisms (such as Clostridium difficile) and the emergence of resistance’

Visual representation of the WHO core components of IPC programmes that the AMR agenda sits within.



Background

- All of the UKOTs signed a joint statement re AMR:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39298351/>

The medium to long term aims adopted by Gibraltar are to:

- Build and sustain global political will for action, bolstered by public support, civil society advocacy, and private sector partnerships that cross sectors
- Ensure all humans, animals, and plants, have sustainable and equitable access to appropriate and effective treatments. By doing so, we will:
 - Arrest and reverse mortality and morbidity rates attributable to and associated with AMR, while also containing and controlling rates of resistance
 - Build health, food, and economic security for the world, while ensuring sustainable systems mitigate the impact of AMR on climate change which, in turn, will underpin efforts to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Gibraltar context

- This AMR strategy* is primarily targeted towards the Gibraltar Health Authority
- This is because:
 - i. the population can access antibiotics in Spain
 - ii. there is no systematic healthcare regulation of the private sector in Gibraltar meaning that antibiotic prescribing cannot be monitored or directly influenced. To mitigate this all of the materials and campaigns are shared with private health sector colleagues such as antibiotic prescribing guidance on EOLAS
 - iii. ~ 100% of food is imported therefore no direct ability to influence antibiotic prescribing in the farming sector/food industry

*There is only a single national tier in Gibraltar due to the small geographical context



The GHA strategy is based around 10 pillars

1. Diagnostics
2. Epidemiology
3. Guidance
4. Audit & Clinical Governance
5. Surveillance
6. Infection Prevention & Control
7. Collaboration with UKHSA, NHS & partner agencies
8. Education, communication & engagement
9. Multi-disciplinary team working internally & externally
10. Research & Development



1. Diagnostics

The GHA operate a single laboratory and hold contracts with laboratories based in Spain and the UK for more reference & confirmatory testing

Regarding the GHA laboratory, a significant amount of work has been undertaken since the Covid-19 pandemic including:

- Development of Laboratory Quality Assurance & Management systems
- Expansion of rapid diagnostics
- Repatriation of tests to reduce laboratory turnaround
- Development & training of scientific staff

All of the above leading to increased resilience of the GHA laboratory service

2. Data & Epidemiology

- Improvement and utilisation GHA laboratory data to prospectively monitor resistance patterns
- Adapt guidance to local resistance patterns
- Monitor temporal trends both locally and globally: specifically UK, Spain and Morocco due to the interconnectivity of the local population with these countries
- Compare and benchmark with peers where possible
- Make relevant datasets accessible to local clinicians

3. Clinical Guidance

- To resource and support a resilient Consultant Medical Microbiology service to provide high-quality clinical diagnostic and antimicrobial advice to GHA clinicians
- Complete set of Antimicrobial Guidance for Primary & Secondary care for patients of all ages was developed from 2014-2018
- Review, update & build on existing guidance as needed, based on latest UK, EU & international evidence-based guidelines, adopting the WHO AWaRe classification of antibiotics to aid stewardship
- Stakeholder consultation for guidance
- Use EOLAS App and Webviewer to increase accessibility of guidance within the GHA & encourage private sector Gibraltar healthcare prescribers to adopt
- To ensure accurate recording of antibiotic allergies and appropriately test and challenge these when uncertain

4. Audit & Clinical Governance

- Audit GHA compliance with antimicrobial guidance, in particular to monitor antimicrobial usage using the WHO AWaRe categorisation
- Feedback compliance to prescribers and healthcare teams
- Encourage GHA staff involvement in audit and quality improvement
- Analyse & investigate prescribing errors and incidents
- Anticipate & react to drug shortages

5. Surveillance

- Monitor for trends in multi-drug resistant organisms including but not limited to:
 - Meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)
 - Extended spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL) producing Enterobacterales
 - Carbapenemase producing Enterobacterales (CPE)
 - Glycopeptide resistant Enterococci (GRE)
 - *Candida auris*
 - Multi-resistant *Neisseria gonorrhoea*
 - Multi- and extensively resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB, XDR-TB)
- Surveillance screening for multi-drug resistant organisms in high- risk populations
- Surveillance for multi-drug resistance in GHA patients repatriated from external healthcare facilities and any non-residents who have received healthcare abroad
- Improved surveillance enables outbreaks to be identified rapidly and Outbreak Control Teams to be established: usually chaired by the Director of Public Health and formal minutes shared with the GHA Executive Team

6. Infection Prevention & Control

- Embed high standards of adherence to standard infection control precautions across the GHA & ERS
- Embed use of transmission-based precautions, and use single-room isolation precautions as required, for patients with, or at risk of multi-resistant transmissible organisms
- Screening & surveillance of high-risk patients for multi-resistant organisms
- Develop negative pressure isolation facilities at St Bernard's Hospital to safeguard against spread of MDR-TB & XDR-TB
- Adopt, implement and adhere to UK NHS National Cleaning Standards
- Involve & seek Infection Prevention & Control input into the design and build of new healthcare facilities to ensure these aspire to and meet the required NHS standard

7. Collaboration with NHS, UKHSA & Partner Agencies

- Through ongoing participation & involvement in the UKHSA UK Overseas Territories network collaborate with UK and other UKOTs on antimicrobial stewardship, laboratory development and infection prevention & control
- To collaborate with partner Acute NHS Trust organisations to share learning, guidance and support training & development
- Although Gibraltar has no/ very limited agricultural use of antimicrobials, to collaborate with local veterinary surgeons in relation to antimicrobial use & resistance issues in local wild and domestic animals
- To collaborate with Environmental Agency to investigate clusters of antimicrobial resistant organisms related to environmental or food exposures

8. Education, Communication & Engagement

- Promote & embed antimicrobial stewardship in continuous professional development for healthcare staff and mandatory training for all prescribers
- To adopt & embed, as appropriate, the EU E-Bug learning package for school- children from reception to Key Stage 1-4
- To continue to support public awareness campaigns year-round using GHA facilities infomercials in addition to enhanced media focus during the annual World Antimicrobial Awareness Week campaign
- To promote use of EOLAS guidance for local clinicians- GHA and independent sector

9. Multi-Disciplinary Team Working

- The GHA Antimicrobial Stewardship Team was established by the Consultant Medical Microbiologist in 2015: a multi-disciplinary team of medical microbiology doctors & scientists, doctors (prescribers) from community, hospital and ERS, pharmacists, infection prevention & control practitioners, health promotion & senior nursing
- To continue to promote MDT working in antimicrobial stewardship
- To engage with and encourage independent sector involvement in the GHA Antimicrobial Stewardship team
- To promote multi-disciplinary team clinical discussions between attending clinical team, medical microbiology doctors, pharmacists, laboratory scientists, infection prevention & control & public health teams to encourage good antimicrobial stewardship and early identification of rising trends or outbreaks in multi-drug resistant organisms
- To collaborate as needed with colleagues in NHS, UKHSA reference laboratories, cross-border agencies in response to cases, periods of increased incidence or outbreaks of multi-drug resistant organisms

10. Education, Research & Development

- To continue to encourage strong links between GHA and University of Gibraltar in local healthcare education programmes
- To develop and promote research in antimicrobial resistance locally
- To develop R&D links to enable and support involvement of local patients in relevant multi-centre research trials in the field of antimicrobial resistance
- To collaborate with UKHSA & NHS partner organisations to develop local GHA services (e.g. diagnostics) to combat the spread of antimicrobial resistance

To note: private healthcare providers

- Private healthcare clinics require Office of Fair Trade licenses and there is no systematic regulation or inspection of healthcare premises including their approach to IPC and antibiotic prescribing
- Further regulation is under consideration by the Minister for Health related to the opportunity for updating the Medical and Health Act (1997)

To note: Community dentistry

- All community dentistry is private in Gibraltar
- Dentists require Office of Fair Trade licenses and there is no systematic regulation or inspection of healthcare premises including their approach to IPC and antibiotic prescribing
- Further regulation is under consideration by the Minister for Health related to the opportunity for updating the Medical and Health Act (1997)

To note: animal health

- There are 2 veterinary practices in Gibraltar
- The Director of Public Health is in the process of developing a MoU with them regarding notification of animal disease that may impact upon human health
- Future collaboration is planned to explore further with them antibiotic prescribing

Governance & monitoring of progress

- The GHA Antimicrobial Stewardship Team has a pivotal role in terms of leading, coordination, planning, delivery and monitoring across the AMR agenda
- This team reports into the monthly Infection Control Committee, chaired by the Director of Public Health, that reports into the GHA Executive team and GHA Board
- There are no mechanisms currently in place to undertake this function across the private sector, as described in slides 15-17
- This strategy provides evidence relating to [International Health Regulation compliance](#) Core capacity domain 9: IPC