

Lack of diagnostic use hampering fight against antimicrobial resistance

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AMSTERDAM— A [new report](#) from [Health Action International](#) (HAI) and the [PHG Foundation](#) out today (Tuesday 24 January) says that the development and widespread use of more accurate and rapid diagnostic testing can play a major role in tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The misuse and overuse of antimicrobials are the key drivers to the development of AMR, which the World Health Organization [has declared](#) as one of the top 10 global health threats facing humanity. Yet, decisions over the appropriate treatment of infections are often made without diagnostic tests, increasing the likelihood that an ineffective therapy may be prescribed, for example, an antibiotic to treat a viral infection, or a bacterial infection resistant to that drug. This in turn adds fuel to the flames of the ever-growing threat posed by AMR.

According to the report, [Diagnostics to Address Antimicrobial Resistance](#), better uptake and availability of tests, particularly rapid tests at the point of care, is an essential tool to better manage the use of antimicrobials and mitigate the challenges posed by AMR.

HAI Senior Policy Advisor, Jaume Vidal, said:

“Better access and more widespread use of diagnostics can make a difference in the fight against AMR and demonstrates the need for a more comprehensive and encompassing approach to health technologies that goes beyond medicines and vaccines”.

The paper makes several recommendations for improving the uptake and availability of diagnostic tests, including investing in their development, capitalising on familiarity with rapid testing brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic to boost uptake and support healthcare providers to use such tests, and increasing knowledge and understanding of AMR among healthcare professionals and patients.

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