



National Collaborating Centre
for Infectious Diseases

Centre de collaboration nationale
des maladies infectieuses

International Experts Meet in Winnipeg to Plan Fight Against “Superbugs”

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Winnipeg, MB: The National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCCID) is hosting a consultation with national and international experts in Winnipeg on February 10th and 11th, 2010 to discuss ways to fight the threat posed by “superbugs,” or bacteria that are increasingly resistant to conventional treatment with antibiotics.

Infections caused by organisms that are resistant to antibiotics are of increasing concern in public health. Initially, resistant organisms were identified only in hospital settings. However, in recent years, resistant organisms have caused infections in people who have never been hospitalized. These community-acquired or community-associated antimicrobial resistant infections can be common, severe, and easily transmitted.

Resistant bacteria transmitted in the food chain are also a concern (for example, *E. coli*). We must prevent transmission of superbugs from 'farm to fork'. This means that human health experts need to work with the agricultural and food industries.

“This consultation is a unique opportunity to bring together physicians, researchers and public sector representatives from the human, animal and environmental health fields,” said Dr. Margaret Fast, Scientific Director at NCCID. “We are fortunate to be able to gather our country’s most experienced and passionate leaders in antimicrobial resistance to identify priorities for addressing this complex issue.”

The consultation will also provide an opportunity for Canadians to learn what strategies work in other countries. “These superbugs do not stay within national boundaries. We are collaborating with Dr. Stef Bronzwaer of the European Food Safety Authority (Italy) and Dr. Lauri Hicks of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S.A) to address what we know to be an international issue.” said Dr. Allan Ronald, Senior Scientific Advisor at the International Centre for Infectious Diseases.

The outcome of the consultation is expected to be an Action Plan, modelled on similar plans in the European Union and United States, to help Canada address antimicrobial resistance in the community. It will need to address the complex relationship between human health, the food we eat, and the environment.

NCCID is one of six centres in Canada that works to connect public health workers with the research and practical evidence they need to make program and policy decisions. It was established in 2004 in response to the SARS crisis in Canada and is hosted by the International Centre for Infectious Diseases in Winnipeg.

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