

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN NORTHERN REMOTE AND ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Socio-economic conditions such as overcrowding, poverty, and insufficient water supplies in many northern remote and Aboriginal communities may increase the frequency of infectious disease. This results in increased antibiotic use and subsequent increased risk of antimicrobial resistance in these communities.

Why is Antimicrobial Resistance in Northern Remote and Aboriginal Communities a Problem?

- Many northern Aboriginal (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) communities are challenged by socio-economic conditions (overcrowding, poverty, water conditions) that put them at increased risk for infectious diseases.
- Tuberculosis, skin and soft tissue infections, sexually transmitted infections, otitis media, and respiratory infections occur with greater frequency in these communities. There is corresponding increased use of antibiotics to treat these infections.
- Drug-resistant tuberculosis and community-associated methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* infections are two AMR infections of concern.

What can be done?

Everyone has a role to play in preventing the propagation of antimicrobial resistance in northern remote and Aboriginal communities.

- **Reducing the risk of infectious diseases:** The risk of infectious diseases can be reduced by increasing immunization coverage and the early adoption of new immunization in high risk areas; increasing education starting in pre-school and elementary school on cough etiquette, hand hygiene, appropriate management of cuts and scrapes, and not sharing personal items like towels.
- **Decreasing the use of antibiotics:** A decrease in antibiotic use can be supported by increasing diagnostic capacities and adopting new laboratory technologies to improve diagnostic services for infectious diseases; maintaining continuing professional development of healthcare providers on appropriate utilization of antibiotics; and social marketing to reduce antibiotic overuse and misuse.
- **Providing early diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis along with directly-observed therapy (DOT):** DOT has been shown to reduce the risk of AMR and is a standard of care for tuberculosis.
- **Housing and water supply:** Long-term strategies to improve housing conditions with subsequent reductions in crowding along with improved quality and quantity of piped water will reduce some risk of infectious disease.

Additional Resources

Northern Antibiotic Resistance Partnership
www.narp.ca

Germes Away
www.germesaway.ca