

One child dies every 9 minutes due to antibiotic resistance, warn experts

BENGALURU, DHNS: One child in India dies every nine minutes from an infection caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria, said Dr HB Veena Kumari of the Department of Neuromicrobiology, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS).

She was speaking at the national symposium on 'Emerging and Re-emerging Infections with a Focus on Antimicrobial Resistance' at St Joseph's University here.

Speaking about the effects of antimicrobial resistance, Dr Veena said, "The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly contributed to rising antimicrobial resistance. The World Health Organisation projects that 10 million deaths will occur annually by 2025, if antimicrobial resistance is unaddressed."

It is one of the top 10 global public health threats, as recognised by WHO, said Dr Veena. The WHO report of 2025 states that between 2018 and 2023, antimicrobial resistance increased by over 40% of pathogen-antibiotic combinations, with an average annual increase of 5%.

Dr T S Balganesh, Gaggen Biotechnologies, pointed out that 12 to 36% of haemodialysis patients die from fatal infections, which is second only to cardiovascular diseases as a cause of death. "The risk for infective endocarditis in haemodialysis patients is approximately 18 times higher than in the general population and up to 58% of these episodes are caused by a bacteria named 'S aureus', with an in-hospital mortality of more than 50%," said Dr Balganesh.

The experts also pointed out that India alone accounts for the highest national antimicrobial resistance mortality globally. Hospital pathogens such as MRSA, CRE, ESBL-producing Enterobacteriaceae and MDR Acinetobacter dominate the resistance landscape.