

IN FOCUS

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

There are 376 million new cases of curable sexually transmitted infections (STIs) across the world every year. Antibiotic resistance is making them harder and sometimes impossible to treat.

The bacteria that causes gonorrhoea is particularly prone to drug resistance, which is why it has been identified by the World Health Organization as a priority infection urgently requiring new antibiotics. The scale of gonorrhoea is staggering. Every year there are an estimated 87 million new infections.

Untreated gonorrhoea can have serious and permanent consequences, including infertility in men and women, pelvic inflammatory disease and life-threatening ectopic pregnancy. Gonorrhoea also increases the risk of HIV transmission.

Global partnerships are needed, and must move faster, to support research, development and access to new treatments for gonorrhoea and other curable STIs, for every person who needs them.

THE RISE OF 'SUPER-GONORRHOEA'

The gonorrhoea bacteria can evolve to defeat the drugs designed to kill it. This process has been accelerated

by the inappropriate use of antibiotics. Drug-resistant gonorrhoea has been reported in every region of the world, while some countries are finding 'super-gonorrhoea' infections that are untreatable by all available drugs.

In a WHO survey of 77 countries, 97% reported resistance to commonly used gonorrhoea treatment regimens and 66% to cephalosporins, the last options for treatment with a single drug. The WHO has called for urgent action to develop new antibiotics for gonorrhoea and is partnering with GARDP to support the development of a new treatment.

"GARDP is developing new treatments on a not-for-profit basis through public-private partnerships. One new antibiotic showing promise is for drug-resistant gonorrhoea, an infection that has failed treatment with last-resort antibiotics in at least 10 countries. If it works, this partnership could be a model for how to increase access to and affordability of medicines, which is key to achieving universal health coverage."

DR TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS
WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

THE GARDP RESPONSE

Working with partners, including WHO, GARDP has developed a research and development strategy for STIs, prioritizing a new treatment for gonorrhoea. Alongside the development of zoliflodacin, a novel antibiotic to treat gonorrhoea, GARDP is evaluating other potential drug candidates, investigating combinations of antibiotics to treat STIs, and working to ensure new treatments can be integrated into international and national guidelines and are accessible to all.

DEVELOPING A NEW TREATMENT

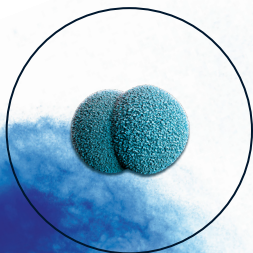
GARDP is partnering with biotech Entasis Therapeutics on a novel antibiotic called zoliflodacin, the only drug being developed specifically to treat gonorrhoea. A first-in-class treatment, zoliflodacin is active against resistant strains of gonorrhoea. Following positive phase 2 results, the drug is being evaluated in a global phase 3 trial. The trial, which launched in 2019, is assessing the effectiveness and safety of zoliflodacin against standard treatments and is expected to enrol 1,000 people with gonorrhoea in the United States, Netherlands, Thailand and South Africa.

SUSTAINABLE ACCESS

Under its partnership agreement with Entasis, GARDP is responsible for the phase 3 trial of zoliflodacin and pharmaceutical development activities to support regulatory approval and market access. GARDP will have commercial rights to zoliflodacin in up to 168 low- and middle-income countries. The zoliflodacin programme is a ground-breaking example of a public-private partnership approach to developing an antibiotic that prioritizes market access within countries that have high rates of gonorrhoea and for patients who need the treatment most.

“The initiation of the phase 3 trial of zoliflodacin is an important milestone and brings hope for people affected by gonorrhoea. The global nature of the trial, across four continents, represents our commitment to ensuring this treatment is available to anyone who needs it, wherever they live.”

DR MANICA BALASEGARAM
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GARDP



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GARDP is calling on the world to support the delivery of five new treatments by 2025 to tackle drug-resistant infections that pose the greatest threat to global health and economic security. This includes a new antibiotic for gonorrhoea. **GARDP** is seeking €500 million to develop these treatments. If we act now, collectively and with urgency, we can prevent a post-antibiotic era.