“Antibiotic” has had its day… time to use more specific terms like antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, or anti-inflammatory medicine?

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INTRODUCTION – What we already know

- Patients understand antibiotics can effectively treat bacterial infections, but not coughs and colds
- Some patients report antibiotics can treat non-bacterial infections and symptoms
  - What can be effectively treated with antibiotics:
    - Antiviral: 67% agreed
    - Antifungal: 53% agreed
    - Anti-inflammatory: 56% agreed
    - Other:
      - Anti-viral: 38%
      - Antifungal: 29%
      - Anti-inflammatory: 32%
    - Large majority: 60% disagreed
  - Most coughs, colds, and other respiratory infections not treatable with antibiotic antibiotics

- UK surveys show a person’s antibiotic use is not related to their knowledge of antibiotics
- Multifaceted Antimicrobial stewardship interventions can reduce antibiotic use

AIMS

- Determine the general public’s understanding about antibiotics and resistance:
  - What antibiotics are
  - What illnesses antibiotics can help
- Determine the general public’s reported use of antibiotics
- Compare reported use in 2017 to 2014
- Use results to inform future public education needs and campaigns

METHODS

- 1,691 adults (15+) in England participated in face-to-face interviews at home using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing.
- Interviews were done by Ipsos MORI omnibus between 24th Jan to 5th Feb 2017
- Data is weighted so that is it broadly representative of the population.
- Results in different groups of the population were compared

RESULTS

- In 2014 65% had symptoms of an infection in the past 12 months
- A cold/runny nose: 28%
- A cough: 24%
- Flu symptoms: 17%
- A chest infection: 11%
- A skin infection: 5%
- A throat infection: 4%
- A nasal infection: 4%
- Other: 3%

- In 2017 74% had symptoms of an infection in the past 12 months
- A cold/runny nose: 30%
- A cough: 39%
- Flu symptoms: 18%
- A chest infection: 15%
- A skin infection: 10%
- A throat infection: 4%
- A nasal infection: 6%
- Other: 7%

- In 2017 the antibiotic use was much lower
- 2017 reported use was much lower for infections which are often treated with OTC medicines
  - A cold/runny nose: 58%
  - A cough: 37%
  - Flu symptoms: 8%
  - A chest infection: 15%
  - A skin infection: 10%
  - A throat infection: 3%
  - A nasal infection: 5%
  - Other: 7%

- In 2017 understanding about what an antibiotic treats was lower in:
  - Social classes C2, DE, if they had not visited GP surgery

DISCUSSION

- There are many limitations to the data collection
  - The ten fold difference in antibiotics for some infections (cold/runny nose) over the 3 years
  - Real?
  - Or due to explanation in 2017 giving examples of antibiotics (amoxicillin or penicillin), and clarifying that paracetamol or ibuprofen or other over the counter products such as cough syrups are not antibiotics?

- This hypothesis is supported by our survey data (Figure to right): those with cold/runny noise: or cough, throat, ear, sinus, chest infection or flu symptoms reported taking OTC and other remedies for their symptoms.

- Other qualitative work with young people also indicates they think paracetamol is an antibiotic

CONCLUSIONS

- The misunderstanding of the term antibiotics
- Why the public may think paracetamol is an antibiotic
- If using the terms antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, ant-inflammatory, anti-pyretic/anti-fever increases public understanding
- If using antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal improves antibiotic use

REFERENCES

- Paraskeva-Hadjichambi P, Khouri P, Gal M, et al. Understanding was lower in:
- Social classes C2, DE, if they had not visited GP surgery

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- All the public who have participated in focus groups and questionnaires and leaflet development
- Everyone in the e-Bug team and PCU team
- All the societies who have commented and endorsed, especially RCGP who host all materials, and BSAC

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