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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

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EU MEMBER STATES ENDORSE THE LIST OF ANTIMICROBIALS RESERVED FOR HUMAN USE, BUT THE DISPUTE HAS NOT DIED DOWN

The list of antimicrobials reserved for treating some human infections was put forward by the EU Commission as one of the requirements envisaged by the regulation on veterinary medicinal products to combat antimicrobial resistance. It will come into effect 6 months after the publication, which is going to take place in a few weeks.

The list is derived from the recommendations by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and has been on the agenda of the European Parliament's Environment, Public Health, and Food Safety (ENVI) committee. However, it is still a subject of dispute amongst stakeholders. For instance, the healthcare professionals' network Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) ,is not impressed' with the final endorsement from the member states. As explained by the network representative Erik Ruiz, ,the fact that the list was approved by a group mainly formed of veterinarian experts, the Standing Committee of Veterinary Medicinal Products (within EMA), is indicative that human health experts' contributions have not been sufficiently taken into consideration.'

In the earlier months, the list had already sparked several heated debates in the European Parliament's ENVI committee. Members were repeatedly asking why the last-line antimicrobial colistin was left on the list, even though it is categorised by WHO as ,highest priority critically important antimicrobial (HPCIA).

Source: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/health-consumers/news/list-of-antimicrobials-still-disputed-despite-endorsement-by-member-states/>

POLL: NEARLY HALF OF EUROPEAN WORKERS ARE AT HIGH RISK OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

In line with the survey conducted by wellbeing services company LifeWorks, the morale of European employees has suffered in an unprecedented way because of COVID-19, the war in Ukraine, as well as the crisis linked to the increase in living costs across the EU.

Nearly half of the respondents from 6 EU countries admitted they became more sensitive to stress than before the pandemic. Moreover, one-third opined that their mental health was negatively influencing their productivity. Overall, as many as 41% of interviewees surveyed by LifeWorks were considered to be at high risk of potentially encountering mental health disorders.

The report also found that women, parents, youngsters, and those with lower incomes are struggling the most, hence the correlation between income and mental health is 'very strong.' Therefore, European workers are more and more anxious due to the high inflation. It is also worth mentioning that more than 30% of respondents claimed they did not have any emergency savings to use in case of crisis. Nevertheless, there is at least one positive finding from this survey – 63% of respondents said they were likely to ask for professional help if struggling with a mental health issue.

Source: <https://www.euronews.com/next/2022/07/01/nearly-half-of-european-workers-living-with-mental-health-issues-and-stress-new-poll-shows>

WHO'S EUROPE DIRECTOR: HEALTH SYSTEMS NEED TO BE BETTER THAN PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

While commenting on a WHO policy brief on backlogs and waiting lists, the director of the WHO's Europe office Hans Kluge warned that a major concern since the onset of the pandemic has been its impact on countries' capacity to maintain essential health care.

Kluge underlined that over 90% of the WHO European region countries reported disruptions regarding the required health services in 2020, which led to increasing backlogs and waiting lists. It was also highlighted that the health workforce was chronically overstretched, as well as unprotected from severe burnout and fatigue.

„Bringing care back to previous levels before the epidemic will not be enough to overcome the backlogs. We have pre-pandemic waiting times that are quite severe in several countries. That number only started to increase during the pandemic,“ said Ewout van Ginneken, co-author of the policy brief during the discussion that took place on Tuesday (June 6).

According to the brief, the countries trying to address the backlogs are widely using three strategies: increasing the supply of workforce and staffing, improving productivity, capacity, and demand management; as well as investing in infrastructure.

Source: <https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/publications/i/addressing-backlogs-and-managing-waiting-lists-during-and-beyond-the-covid-19-pandemic>

Thank you for your attention!

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