

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 508
(A-01)

Introduced by: California Delegation
Subject: Antimicrobial Use and Resistance
Referred to: Reference Committee E
(Richard R. Johnston, MD, Chair)

1 Whereas, Antibiotics remain perhaps the single most widely useful and important medical
2 advance of the modern era, but their effective use is increasingly threatened by bacterial
3 resistance, including multiple resistance in an increasing number of common and serious
4 pathogens; and

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6 Whereas, Prestigious medical and public health authorities such as the Centers for Disease
7 Control and Prevention, Institute of Medicine, Food and Drug Administration, World Health
8 Organization, American Public Health Association and many others cited bacteria resistance as
9 an increasingly serious and costly medical and public health threat in need of much greater
10 attention and action, including more education, surveillance, and regulation; and

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12 Whereas, The spread of bacterial resistance arises not only from unnecessary clinical use in
13 human medicine, an issue the California Medical Association has begun to address, but also
14 from massive use in animal agriculture, with increasing evidence that resistance developed in
15 animals is spreading to human pathogens; and

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17 Whereas, An estimated 16 million pounds of antimicrobials, or 80% of all such usage in
18 agriculture, are used subtherapeutically as growth promoters, as pesticides, or prophylactically,
19 all low-level constant uses likely to promote the development of resistance, and this use is
20 allowed commercially and often without veterinary supervision; and

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22 Whereas, The FDA has recently proposed to prohibit the agricultural use of at least two
23 commonly-used fluoroquinolone antibiotic and estimates that at least 5,000 Americans are
24 harmed annually due to use of these drugs, but will need much support to enforce this and
25 future such public health restrictions; therefore be it

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27 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association [work with other organizations to] establish
28 a national program to counter antibiotic resistance in clinical practice similar to the California
29 Medical Association Foundation AWARE program; and be it further

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31 RESOLVED, That our AMA [is] oppose[d to] the use of antimicrobials at less than [non-
32]therapeutic levels in agriculture, or as pesticides or growth promoters, and urges that [non-
33 therapeutic use in animals of antimicrobials (that are also used in humans) should be terminated
34 or phased out based on scientifically sound risk assessments ~~these uses be phased out by~~
35 regulation; and be it further

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37 RESOLVED, That our AMA urge that increased surveillance of antimicrobial use and resistance
38 be funded and instituted as recommended by the Institute of Medicine and American Society of
39 Microbiology.

Fiscal Note: \$2,000,000
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RELEVANT AMA POLICY

H-100.973 Combating Antimicrobial Resistance through Education

Our AMA: (1) encourages the federal government, the World Health Organization, the World Medical Association, and the International Federation of Pharmacists to promote more effective education concerning the appropriate use of antibiotics;

(2) strongly urges physicians to educate their patients about their antimicrobial therapy, the importance of compliance with the prescribed regimen, and the problem of antimicrobial resistance;

(3) will continue to educate physicians and physicians-in-training about the appropriate prescribing of antimicrobial agents;

(4) encourages the use of antibiotic resistance management programs; these education-based programs should be multidisciplinary and cooperative (i.e., including infectious disease physicians, infection-control specialists, microbiology laboratory personnel, and clinical pharmacists); and

(5) encourages continued scientific research on the issue of antibiotic resistance. (Sub. Res. 521, A-94; Reaffirmed by Rules & Credentials Cmt., A-96; Reaffirmation I-98; Modified: CSA Rep. 3, A-00)

H-480.958 Genetically Modified Crops and Foods

(1) Our AMA recognizes the continuing validity of the three major conclusions contained in the 1987 National Academy of Sciences white paper "Introduction of Recombinant DNA-Engineered Organisms into the Environment." [The three major conclusions are: (a) There is no evidence that unique hazards exist either in the use of rDNA techniques or in the movement of genes between unrelated organisms; (b) The risks associated with the introduction of rDNA-engineered organisms are the same in kind as those associated with the introduction of unmodified organisms and organisms modified by other methods; (c) Assessment of the risk of introducing rDNA-engineered organisms into the environment should be based on the nature of the organism and the environment into which it is introduced, not on the method by which it was produced.]

(2) That federal regulatory oversight of agricultural biotechnology should continue to be science-based and guided by the characteristics of the plant, its intended use, and the environment into which it is to be introduced, not by the method used to produce it, in order to facilitate comprehensive, efficient regulatory review of new genetically modified crops and foods.

(3) Our AMA believes that as of December 2000, there is no scientific justification for special labeling of genetically modified foods, as a class, and that voluntary labeling is without value unless it is accompanied by focused consumer education.

(4) Our AMA supports efforts for the systematic safety assessment of genetically modified foods and encourages: (a) development and validation of additional techniques for the detection and/or assessment of unintended effects; (b) continued use of methods to detect substantive changes in nutrient or toxicant levels in genetically modified foods as part of a substantial equivalence evaluation; (c) development and use of alternative transformation technologies to avoid utilization of antibiotic resistance markers that code for clinically relevant antibiotics, where feasible; and (d) that priority should be given to basic research in food allergenicity to support the development of improved methods for identifying potential allergens.

(5) Our AMA supports continued research into the potential consequences to the environment of genetically modified crops including the: (a) assessment of the impacts of pest-protected crops on nontarget organisms compared to impacts of standard agricultural methods, through rigorous field evaluations; (b) assessment of gene flow and its potential consequences including key factors that regulate weed populations; rates at which pest resistance genes from the crop would be likely to spread among weed and wild populations; and the impact of novel resistance traits on weed abundance; (c) implementation of resistance management practices and continued monitoring of their effectiveness; and (d) development of monitoring programs to assess ecological impacts of pest-protected crops that may not be apparent from the results of field tests.

(6) Our AMA recognizes the many potential benefits offered by genetically modified crops and foods, not support a moratorium on planting genetically modified crops, and encourage ongoing research developments in food biotechnology.

(7) Our AMA recognizes that the government, industry, and the scientific and medical communities have a responsibility to educate the public and improve the availability of unbiased information on genetically modified crops and of research activities. (CSA Rep. 10, I-00)