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Letters to the Editor

Exploring a new trend in the use of antibiotics in dermatologic procedures



To the Editor:

Antibiotics are among the most widely prescribed medications across numerous medical specialties. From alleviating sore throats to treating urinary tract infections, antibiotics play a critical role in combating bacterial infections. However, these pathogens often evolve to develop resistance against various antibiotics, rendering them futile and ineffective for certain patients. Today, antibiotic resistance continues to pose a major threat in the clinic. In 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported at least 2 million people with antibiotic-resistant infections and at least 23,000 fatalities associated with such infections.¹

Although dermatology has recently seen a drop in antibiotic prescriptions, a recent study suggests that antibiotic use in dermatologic procedures is currently increasing.² The findings from this study provide us with insight into how unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions could be further limited. The study focuses on antibiotics prescribed in the context of 4 popular dermatologic procedures: malignant destructions, benign excisions, malignant excisions, and Mohs surgery. For these surgical procedures, some of the commonly prescribed antibiotics included cephalexin (61%), doxycycline (14.2%), sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim (6.1%), and azithromycin (5.3%).

This cross-sectional analysis explores various trends associated with antibiotic prescriptions, such as the use of flaps versus grafts in Mohs surgery, gender differences, and temporal trends; however, the most remarkable and surprising factor analyzed was geographic variations in antibiotic prescriptions. The researchers observed that, for Mohs surgery, patients in the West North Central states were prescribed antibiotics on 7.6% of the visits; however, patients in the West South Central states received antibiotics on 16.9% of the visits. Patterns of geographical variation in medical practices have been previously studied in the context of conditions such as bacterial pneumonia, acute nasopharyngitis, and upper respiratory infections.³ Interestingly, such discrepancies in antibiotic prescriptions among different regions is prevalent even outside dermatology. Remarkably, over 50% reduction in antibiotics use could be achieved across 3 of the surgical procedures if the highest utilizing regions matched oral antibiotic prescription rates similar to the lowest utilizing region.²

This recent study underscores the possibility and necessity of optimizing antibiotic prescriptions in dermatologic procedures. The existence of such strong geographical variation suggests a need for greater targeting of antibiotic prescriptions, perhaps through quality assurance programs in areas considered to be high utilizing regions. This article serves as a reminder that clinicians must prescribe antibiotics judiciously and that there are

dermatologic procedures for which a reduction in antibiotic use should be further explored.

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The challenges of antimicrobial resistance surveillance in China



To the Editor:

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a global health threat that leads to increasing health care cost, treatment failures, and even deaths.¹⁻³ The People's Republic of China faces similar health care problems toward emerging AMR as its neighboring countries.¹ International surveillance systems, such as the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System and the European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network (EARS-Net), play an important role to present the updated information of the current status and the changing trends of AMR epidemic.^{4,5} In China, there are 2 AMR surveillance networks: China Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System and China Antimicrobial Surveillance Network.^{6,7} The main problem of Chinese AMR surveillance networks is that they focus on the AMR surveillance data from tertiary-care teaching hospitals, which are mostly geographically located in the southeastern region.⁷ The findings cannot be considered as generalization for entire country. Furthermore, most international peer-review publications on the AMR topic in China are interesting in molecular characterization analysis, and the outcomes