

Threat from drug resistant ‘superbugs’ is growing

Drug-resistant infections pose a growing threat to public health. We’re not prepared to meet it.

That’s because the development pipeline of new antibiotics to fend off superbugs has fallen off. Superbugs are strains of bacteria and fungi that have [developed immunity](#) to the medicines used to kill them. Antimicrobials are critical tools in our fight against these pathogens.

The problem is that we’re not developing nearly enough of them and many of the medicines we currently have are no longer effective. It’s imperative that we act now — and fast — to bolster our deteriorating defenses against these often serious and life-threatening infections.

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The problem is not the lack of success in developing new treatments. In the past decade, antibacterial drugs in clinical trials were [more than twice as likely](#) to move from early human testing to FDA approval versus drugs for all other diseases.

Instead, the problem is a fundamentally unique, misaligned market for antimicrobials that makes innovating unviable for developers. This has real impacts for physicians and patients.

Every time we use an antimicrobial, the target microbes have a chance to survive and become resistant. So, clinicians prescribe them only when needed. But this sound medical practice makes for poor economic incentives for private companies in a market system.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.**](#)