

'India is the biggest antibiotic consumer'

Country's Usage Rose From 8bn In 2001 To 12.9bn In 2010, Peaks In Jul-Sept: Study

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London: India has emerged as the world's largest consumer of antibiotics with a 62% increase in popping habits over the last decade.

As the world braces for its worst ever threat in a century — global antibiotic resistance due to unnecessary and unregulated popping of these drugs — an average Indian has been found to be popping over 11 antibiotic pills a year.

India's antibiotic use went up from 8 billion pills in 2001 to 12.9 billion units in 2010.

The study "Global Trends in Antibiotic Consumption 2000-2010" by scientists from Princeton University has found that worldwide antibiotic use rose by a staggering 36% over these 10 years, with five countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and

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> Figure: 36% less than number of pills an average American pops a day (22)

> India's antibiotic use went up from 8 billion units in 2001 to 12.9 billion units in 2010

In India, antibiotic usage peaks between Jul-Sept, coinciding with end of monsoon season

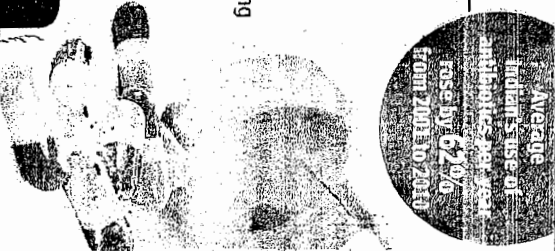
> Worldwide antibiotic use up by staggering 36% over past 10 years; BRICS countries account for over 75% of this surge

> Study confirms increasing resistance to carbapenems and polymyxins — last-resort antibiotics for illnesses without any other known treatment

Antibiotic resistance causes people to be sick for longer; increases risk of death

South Africa (BRICS) — responsible for more than three-quarters of that surge. Among the 16

groups of antibiotics studied, cephalosporins, broad-spectrum penicillins and fluoroqui-



nolones accounted for more than half of that increase, with consumption rising 55% from 2000 to 2010.

The study quantified the rising clamour on antibiotic-resistant pathogens and a loss of efficacy among antibiotics used to combat the most common illnesses. The study has also confirmed an increasing resistance to carbapenems and polymyxins, two classes of drugs long

known as last-resort antibiotics for illnesses without any other known treatment.

Speaking to TOI, one of the authors of the study, Ramanan Laxminarayan, said: "Indians consume a lot of antibiotics, tablets per year. The paper confirms that global use of antibiotics is surging and specially in India. This is both good news and bad news. It means more Indians are able to access antibiot-

ics. However, the massive increase in use, both appropriate and inappropriate, is leading to increase in drug resistance."

The study noted that antibiotic use tended to peak at different times of the year, corresponding in almost every case with the onset of the flu season. In the northern hemisphere, consumption peaked between January and March, while in the southern hemisphere, it peaked

between July and September, coinciding with the end of monsoon.

Antibiotic resistance, when bacteria adapt so antibiotics no longer work in treating infections — causes people to be sick for longer and increases the risk of death.

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

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