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Passage No. 89

Direction: Study the following information carefully and answer the question given below.

Paragraph 1: Antibiotics that once cured ailments across the spectrum are now turning into a potential source of prolonged illness, disability and death. The world is transitioning to a post-antibiotic era where common infections and minor injuries will begin to kill, thanks to increasing antibiotic resistance (ABR). In 2015, such resistance was identified as the cause for about 23,000 deaths annually in the US and about 25,000 such deaths in Europe. While accurate data on the incidence of antibiotic resistance in India is unavailable, the highest number of deaths caused by resistant pathogens passed on to newly born babies from mothers or the environment—approximately 58,000—was in our region.

Paragraph 2: Though ABR in certain cases occurs through the natural evolution of resistance in bacterial pathogens, the rising consumption of antibiotics is a major contributor. Topping this, the New Delhi metallo-beta-lactamase (NDM) enzyme, which makes bacteria resistant to beta-lactam antibiotics, is now present globally. This indicates free movement of ABR across boundaries, with serious consequences. This is nowhere as stark as in India. Our large population is often blamed for the widespread dissemination of a higher number of resistant pathogens, commonly called superbugs. However, it is the interplay of domestic factors such as a weak public health system, cheap antibiotics available in the market, and their unregulated use, that has created ideal conditions for superbugs.

Paragraph 3: Prescription of antibiotics for a variety of diarrhoeal and respiratory infections despite their limited curative potential has exacerbated the situation. Poor regulation of pharmacies and licensing out several pharmacies to a single pharmacist introduces a large number of unqualified personnel into the supply chain. New virtual marketplaces have made the entire drug distribution process an opportunity for unchecked financial gains by irresponsible actors. The lack of awareness among patients regarding the appropriate use of antibiotics has led to self-medication and non-adherence to the prescribed course of antibiotics, further intensifying the problem.

Paragraph 4: The dramatic increase in prevalence of superbugs and the dearth of new antibiotics in the market is a warning signal for India. The absence of a good statistical model to show the relationship between antibiotic consumption and associated resistance makes it difficult to frame usage guidelines for these antibiotics. This in large measure explains the absence of any great success even post the Chennai declaration of 2012. To meet the obligations of this declaration, the National Programme on Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance was launched under the 12th Five-year Plan. A core objective was the generation of quality data from 30 laboratories on antimicrobial resistance of pathogens posing a grave public health risk. Though meant to be completed within 2017, only 10 labs have so far been brought within the data-gathering exercise.

Questions:

1. Which of the following is/are true with respect to the passage?

- I. India lacks a good statistical model to show the relationship between antibiotic consumption and associated resistance.
- II. The highest number of deaths caused by resistant pathogens passed on to newly born babies from mothers or the environment—approximately 58,000—was in our region.
- III. Prescription of antibiotics for a variety of infections despite their limited curative potential has exacerbated the situation.

- A. Only I B. Only II C. Only I and III D. Only II and III
E. All of the above

2. What steps can possibly be taken to curb the menace of ABR in India?

- I. An interconnected system across the nation for collection and analysis of data.
- II. Coordination between the Central and State health departments and formation of an information sharing grid.
- III. Increase the use of home-made medicines for all diseases.

- A. Only I and III B. Only II and III C. Only III D. Only I and II
E. All of the above

3. As per paragraph 3, what are the factors responsible for exacerbating the ABR crisis in India?

- I. Online availability and lack of any regulation
- II. Prevalence of untrained personnel
- III. Self-medication and non-adherence to the prescribed course

- A. Only I B. Only III C. Only I and II D. Only I and III
E. All of the above

4. As per paragraph 2, what are the ideal conditions for the creation of superbugs?

- I. Natural evolution of resistance in bacterial pathogens.
- II. Easy availability of cheap antibiotics
- III. Strong health infrastructure

- A. Only II B. Only I C. Only I and II D. Only II and III
E. None of the above

5. Which of the following options strengthen the line given below?

‘The world is transitioning to a post-antibiotic era where common infections and minor injuries will begin to kill, thanks to increasing antibiotic resistance (ABR).’

- A. Farming organisations have set new targets to reduce the use of antibiotics in raising animals for food.
- B. All state hospitals must sign up to a five-year programme to curb abuse of antibiotics in an effort to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR).
- C. Overuse or misuse of antibiotics is making it more difficult to treat certain diseases, resulting in longer periods of treatment and higher costs.
- D. A and C
- E. All of the above

Correct Answers:

1	2	3	4	5
E	D	E	A	C

Explanations:

1. Refer to:

Paragraph 4: ‘The dramatic increase in prevalence of superbugs and the dearth of new antibiotics in the market is a warning signal for India. The absence of a good statistical model to show the relationship between antibiotic consumption and associated resistance makes it difficult to frame usage guidelines for these antibiotics.’

Statement I is correct.

Paragraph 1: ‘While accurate data on the incidence of antibiotic resistance in India is unavailable, the highest number of deaths caused by resistant pathogens passed on to newly born babies from mothers or the environment—approximately 58,000—was in our region.’

Statement II is correct.

Paragraph 3: ‘Prescription of antibiotics for a variety of diarrhoeal and respiratory infections despite their limited curative potential has exacerbated the situation.’

Statement III is correct.

Hence, **option E** is correct.

2. Statement I is correct as the more data we have, the better we can understand the quantum of the issue and plan accordingly.

Statement II is correct as the disease knows no boundaries and a grid will be critical for coordination especially in a huge nation like India..

Statement III is absurd. Medicines are to be taken as per expert prescription and cannot be prepared at home anyway.

Hence, **option D** is correct.

3. Refer to:

'..Prescription of antibiotics for a variety of diarrhoeal and respiratory infections despite their limited curative potential has exacerbated the situation. Poor regulation of pharmacies and licensing out several pharmacies to a single pharmacist introduces a large number of unqualified personnel into the supply chain. New virtual marketplaces have made the entire drug distribution process an opportunity for unchecked financial gains by irresponsible actors. The lack of awareness among patients regarding the appropriate use of antibiotics has led to self-medication and non-adherence to the prescribed course of antibiotics, further intensifying the problem..'

All the statements are correct as per the highlighted fragments.

Hence, **option E** is correct.

4. Refer to:

'..Though ABR in certain cases occurs through the natural evolution of resistance in bacterial pathogens, the rising consumption of antibiotics is a major contributor. Topping this, the New Delhi metallo-beta-lactamase (NDM) enzyme, which makes bacteria resistant to beta-lactam antibiotics, is now present globally. This indicates free movement of ABR across boundaries, with serious consequences. This is nowhere as stark as in India. Our large population is often blamed for the widespread dissemination of a higher number of resistant pathogens, commonly called superbugs. However, it is the interplay of domestic factors such as a weak public health system, cheap antibiotics available in the market, and their unregulated use, that has created ideal conditions for superbugs...'

Only statement II is correct.

Hence, **option A** is correct.

5. Option B is irrelevant. It does not strengthen the argument in any way.

Option A is incorrect. Although this talks about having a target to reduce ABR but it does state any reason for the same and we cannot assume it.

Option C is correct as it states that antibiotics are making it more difficult to treat certain diseases, resulting in longer periods of treatment and higher costs.

Hence, **option C** is correct.



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