

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Antimicrobial Consumption

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Antibiotic use rates have declined dramatically since the 1990s,<sup>1</sup> in part because of more rational use of these drugs. Judicious antibiotic usage is an important tool, both for proper treatment of patients and avoidance of bacterial resistance to antibiotics. Thus, national surveillance of antimicrobial consumption is needed to evaluate the quality of antibiotic use.<sup>2</sup> The surveillance of outpatient antibiotic use in the Republic of Srpska done this year by Marković-Peković<sup>3</sup> is an important indicator for the quality of local outpatient medicine.

Results of the survey indicate that outpatient use of systemic antibiotics in the Republic of Srpska, with approximate 19 DDD (Defined Daily Dose per 1000 inhabitants per year), does not exceed that in 32 other European countries, yet the European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption (ESAC) stated that such consumption should be further reduced.<sup>4</sup> To reach this goal, it will be necessary to involve the many national programs for family physicians and others who work in primary care. In the article on antibiotic use in the Republic of Srpska, the authors did not mention if such instructions were organized. However, they suggested that optimization of antibiotic use will be obtained "...with strict compliance to the guidelines, and education of professionals and public." It would be nice to know how such education will be done.

It is a pity that the authors did not detail use of antimicrobials in various age groups, especially children. In recent years, outpatient antibiotic utilization has tended to decrease within this age group. For example, overall anti-

biotic prescriptions in France decreased by 57% between 2001 and 2010 in children aged 0 to 24 months, by 50% in children aged 25 months to 6 years, and by 46% in children older than 6 years of age.<sup>5</sup> In all of these groups, the greatest reduction occurred in treatment for rhinopharyngitis (83%), and the lowest reduction was for otitis media, the most common disease of childhood.

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