

# **Household face-to-face survey of home-held antibiotics and awareness of good antibiotic use**

## **Researchers**

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## **Background**

The Government's response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology's report 'Resistance to antimicrobials and other antimicrobial agents' indicated its intention to take forward a comprehensive strategy to tackle the problem of antimicrobial resistance. The key elements of the strategy include prudent antimicrobial use to decrease the pressure for resistance by reducing unnecessary exposure of micro-organisms to antimicrobial agents in clinical practice, and surveillance of antimicrobial usage necessary to inform action. In the autumn of 1999 the Department of Health launched the proposed National Public Awareness Campaign on Antibiotic Resistance. Analysis of the impact of publicity campaigns is seen as essential by the Interdepartmental Steering Group on Antimicrobial Resistance and the Specialist Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance (SACAR)<sup>1</sup>. SACAR is committed to ongoing publicity campaigns.

## **Aims of the study**

To determine:

- The extents to which prescribed antibiotics remain entirely or partially unused in households and how this has changed since a similar survey in 1994.
- The reason why antibiotics remain entirely or partially unused, including whether this is due to households saving them for future episodes of illness.
- The public's awareness of good antibiotic use and relate this to household characteristics.

## **Methods of working**

Two large surveys have been performed in June/July 2003, to allow comparison with the 1994 survey, and in February and March 2003 to match the peak prescribing period. These surveys will form an integral part of the review of the impact of the 1999 and 2001 campaigns and will inform the future campaigns. It will clarify the extent of the problem of residual antibiotics in UK households and identify variables that explain variation. In addition the questionnaire will use the opportunity provided by the Omnibus stratified probability sample to examine variation in attitudes to antibiotics in a large sample of UK households.

## **Funding**

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