

Operation Amrith

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In January 2024, Kerala's Drugs Control Department launched Operation Amrith to tackle [Antimicrobial Resistance \(AMR\)](#) by regulating the sale of antibiotics.



[Ref: downtoearth]

About Operation Amrith:

- **Operation Amrith** (AMRITH - Antimicrobial Resistance Intervention For Total Health) was launched by **Kerala's Drugs Control Department** to prevent antibiotic overuse.
- It aims to end the **over-the-counter (OTC)** sale of antibiotics in Kerala.
- Part of the larger **Kerala Anti-Microbial Resistance Strategic Action Plan (KARSAP)**.

Regulatory Measures:

- Pharmacies are required to keep **accurate sales records of antibiotics**.
- Mandatory display of notices stating antibiotics are **not sold without a doctor's prescription**.
- Strict action against **non-compliant pharmacies and medical stores**.

Public Participation and Reporting:

- The public is encouraged to report pharmacies selling antibiotics without a prescription.
- **Toll-free number (18004253182)** provided for lodging complaints.
- Complaints are to be verified by **corresponding zonal offices** for prompt action.

Government Initiatives and Partnerships:

- **Kerala**, the **first Indian state** with an action plan on **AMR (KARSAP) since 2018**.
- Aligned with India's National Action Plan on AMR, addressing human, animal, and environmental aspects.

- Collaboration with the Centre for Science and Environment for AMR containment.
- Establishment of block-level AMR Committees in all **191 blocks in 2023**.

Awareness and Surveillance Programs:

- Antibiotic **Literate Kerala Campaign** to raise AMR awareness.
- **Kerala Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network (KARS-NET)** launched for human use surveillance.
- AMR laboratory established by **Kerala State Pollution Control Board** for environmental monitoring.

Disposal of Unused Antibiotics:

- **Programme on Removal of Unused Drugs (PROUD)** initiated for proper antibiotic disposal.

Global and Health Implications of AMR:

- AMR, a '**silent pandemic**', caused approximately five million deaths globally in **2019**.
- World Bank's projection of increased healthcare costs due to AMR, reaching **\$1.2 trillion annually by 2050**.
- Potential loss of **3.8%** of global annual **GDP by 2050** due to **AMR**.

Health Department's Additional Measures:

- Goal to stop OTC sale of antibiotics without prescriptions by the **end of 2024**.
- Plans to educate the **medical fraternity** on the **dangers of AMR**.
- Emphasis on **public awareness** about proper **use of antibiotics**.