Preface

This is the seventh SWAB/RIVM NethMap report on the use of antibiotics and trends in antimicrobial resistance in the Netherlands in 2008 and before. NethMap is a product of cooperative efforts of members of The Netherlands Society for Infectious Diseases, The Netherlands Society of Hospital Pharmacists and the Netherlands Society for Medical Microbiology. In 1996 the three societies created the Dutch Working Group on Antibiotic Policy, known as SWAB (Stichting Werkgroep Antibiotica Beleid). SWAB’s mission is to manage, limit and prevent the emergence of resistance to antimicrobial agents among medically important species of microorganisms in the Netherlands, thereby contributing to the quality of care in the Netherlands.

Because of the multidisciplinary composition of SWAB, this foundation can be considered the Dutch equivalent of the Intersectoral Coordinating Mechanisms (ICM’s), recommended by the European Union (2001), to control emerging antimicrobial resistance and promote rational antibiotic use.

SWAB has started several major initiatives to achieve its goals. Among these are training programmes for the rational prescribing of antimicrobial drugs, development of evidence based prescription guidelines, the implementation of tailor made hospital guides for antibiotic prophylaxis and therapy and an integrated nationwide surveillance system for antibiotic use and antimicrobial resistance. These initiatives are corresponding well with the recommendations from the Dutch Council of Health Research (2001).

Following these recommendations SWAB’s work was and still is made possible by structural funds provided by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports and through the Dutch Centre for Infectious Diseases Control (Centrum voor Infectieziektenbestrijding, C1b) in The National Institute of Public Health and the Environment (RIVM).

NethMap 2009 extends and updates the information of the annual reports since 2003. NethMap parallels the monitoring system of antimicrobial resistance and antibiotic usage in animals in the Netherlands, called MARAN, by the Veterinary Antibiotic Usage and Resistance Surveillance Working Group (VANTURES, see www.cidc-lelystad.nl). Recently MARAN 2007 has been published. Together NethMap and MARAN are aiming at providing a comprehensive overview of antibiotic use in the Netherlands in man and in animal husbandry and therefore are offering insight into the ecological pressure which is associated with emerging resistance trends.
The interaction between the human and veterinarian areas of antibiotic use and resistance is explored in a working group started in 2003 by the Ministry of health, Welfare and Sports and that of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. Both SWAB and its veterinary sister group are represented in this interdepartmental working group in which the evolution of antibiotic use and resistance in the Netherlands is discussed on the basis of SWAB’s and MARAN’s surveillance data.

NethMap is thus providing extensive and detailed insight in the Dutch state of medically important antimicrobial resistance, and compares well with the data of the European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (EARSS, see www.earss.rivm.nl). EARSS collects resistance data of a limited number of invasive bacterial species for the majority of European countries, Israel and Turkey.

We trust that NethMap continues to contribute to our knowledge and awareness regarding the use of antibiotics and the resistance problems which may arise. We thank all who are contributing to the surveillance efforts of SWAB, and express our hope that they are willing to continue their important clinical and scientific support to SWAB.

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