



**Tipo de trabalho:** RESUMO SIMPLES (MÁXIMO 2 PÁGINAS)

## **NEW PARADIGMS IN PROMOTING HEALTH LITERACY IN THE CONTEXT OF ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE: ADVANCES AND FUTURE STRATEGIES<sup>1</sup>**

**Zélia Anastácio<sup>2</sup>, Ana Félix<sup>3</sup>, Ana Maria Oliveira<sup>4</sup>, Judite Regales Matias<sup>5</sup>,  
Maria De Lourdes Pereira<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Trabalho de Projeto de Investigação

<sup>2</sup> Research Center for Child Studies, Institute of Education, University of Minho, Campus de Gualtar, 4710-057 Braga - PORTUGAL

<sup>3</sup> Directorate-General of Health | Support and Public Health Emergencies Management, Medical Doctor at the Programme for Prevention and Control of Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance, 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal

<sup>4</sup> Public Health Unit of the National Public Health, ACES Baixo Vouga 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal

<sup>5</sup> Public Health Unit of the National Public Health, ACES Baixo Vouga 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal

<sup>6</sup> Department of Medical Sciences & CICECO - Aveiro Institute of Materials, University of Aveiro, 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal

Resistance to antibiotics remains one of the most serious public health problems globally due to their misuse or overuse. According to data from Eurobarometer 445 on antibiotic knowledge, Portugal is one of the European countries where there is a greater lack of knowledge about the action of antibiotics: 60% of population consider that antibiotics act on viruses and 50% believe they are useful for treat colds and flu, which is well above the European average. Only 20% of citizens report having received information in the last twelve months on this subject, which is well below the European average. Despite the growing sensitivity of society to the risks associated with the widespread use of antibiotics, the numbers above reflect the unaware of the danger associated. Then it is still necessary to encourage citizens to use effective practices to promote health. In addition, efforts to reduce the risks associated with the misuse of antibiotics need to be regularly re-examined.

In its global action plan, one of World Health Organization's strategic objectives to solve this problem, is to improve awareness and understanding of antimicrobial resistance within society, through effective communication, education and training.

This strategy can be achieved through the interaction between health professionals and the community, for a more efficient communication of medical information about the careful use of these drugs.

This paper emphasizes the relevant role of health professionals in disseminating medical literacy among the community in order to educate them, through expanding their knowledge on the proper use of antibiotics. As widely recognized the value of strategic health communication as adjuvant in this context is also considered. It is intended to improve the communication of medical information as a way to promote citizens' health literacy throughout the life cycle. We propose a set of cross-cutting activities at different levels of the general population (eg. students, patient associations) to elucidate the mechanism of action of antimicrobial agents and their interaction with other drugs, addressing risks, and benefits in an integrated approach. This process encompasses relevant interpersonal skills that enable the practitioner to communicate (counsel and educate) with the



**Tipo de trabalho:** RESUMO SIMPLES (MÁXIMO 2 PÁGINAS)

audience / patient, expand their knowledge.

Thus, the specific objectives are as follows:

- (a) sensitize / reduce / control the risks and risks associated with the use of antibiotics for health and the environment;
- (b) encourage changes in attitudes, by adopting appropriate practices in the prevention of risks to safeguard health;
- c) To promote the strengthening of the communication capacity and intervention of the medical information with the citizens;
- d) encourage interdisciplinary communication in health professionals.

Altogether these actions are promising measures to promote health-related change of attitudes.

Finally, it is hoped that these strategies will contribute in the future to a better awareness, information of the target population for a change of attitudes, to safeguard their health and the environment.