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ANTIBIOTICS THAT ARE USELESS ON HALF OF BRITISH**CHILDREN**  
  
**BYLINE:** BY BEN SPENCER MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT  
  
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COMMON antibiotics are now useless at fighting bugs in almost half of British **children,**experts have warned.

Some 48 per cent of youngsters with a common bladder complaint were carrying germs resistant to Ampicillin - a drug used to treat several illnesses.

Twenty-five per cent had become resistant to Trimethoprim, another common antibiotic, and 8 per cent could not be treated with Co-Amoxiclav.

It means the most frequently used antibiotics could soon be rendered unusable, researchers from the University of Bristol and Imperial College London suggested.

The research, published last night in the British Medical Journal, adds to a growing body of evidence that **antibiotic** **resistance** is creating a breed of untreatable superbugs. Dame Sally Davies, the Chief Medical Officer, has repeatedly warned that superbugs risk creating a public health catastrophe' on the scale of terrorism or global warming.

Her message has gained traction at the very highest levels - David Cameron has warned that superbugs' resistance could send medicine back to the dark ages'.

Part of the problem is overuse of antibiotics, which increases the chances of bacteria becoming resistant.

The study confirmed doctors' concerns - proving that E.coli bacteria remained unaffected by the drugs for six months after treatment. The scientists focused on **children** with urinary tract infections, analysing data from 78,000 **children** around the world.

They reviewed 58 studies and assessed how many **children** had E.coli bacteria that was resistant to commonly used antibiotics.

Developing countries had higher rates of resistant bugs which is blamed on antibiotics being freely available over the counter there.

But even in Britain, where they are tightly controlled, almost half of **children** tested were carrying bacteria resistant to some antibiotics. In wealthy countries participating in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development forum, more than half of all samples were resistant to Ampicillin and almost a quarter impervious to Trimethoprim.

Three in ten were resistant to Co-Trimoxazole and 8.2 per cent were resistant to Co-Amoxiclav. Resistance was much greater in non-OECD countries, where almost four in five samples did not respond to Ampicillin, almost 70 per cent to Co-Trimoxazole and three in five to Co-Amoxiclav.

The scientists wrote: Our findings detail global high-level resistance to some of the most commonly prescribed antibiotics for **children** in primary care, which could result in several drugs becoming ineffective first-line treatments.' Urinary tract infections are very common in **children,** with one in ten girls and one in 30 boys having them by the age of 16.

E.coli is responsible for more than 80 per cent of all urinary tract infections in **children.**

Study co-lead researcher Dr Ceire Costelloe, of Imperial College London, added: The results also suggest previous antibiotic use increased the subsequent risk of E.coli resistance to that particular antibiotic - for up to six months after treatment.'

A Department of Health spokesperson said: We know we are using too many antibiotics, and that the bugs they fight are becoming more and more resistant. This is putting our future health at risk so we must reduce the amount we are using.

Antibiotics should be used to treat bacterial infections only, and not viruses like cold and flu.'

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