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GAMRIC 2026: Aligning Innovation, Investment and Impact

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With the world experiencing constrained, challenging and uncertain times on many levels, the field of infectious diseases research, innovation and development including antimicrobial resistance (AMR) appears, like many areas of global health, to have become less of a priority for action and funding. Andrew Bowskill, Partnership and Stakeholder Lead at Biointelect Venturer in Australia, reports from the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Innovators Conference (GAMRIC) 2026, revealing a story of a resilient, determined and collaborative community, and one that Australia can and should play a bigger role in, for the betterment of global health outcomes.

The global antimicrobial resistance (AMR) research and development community came together in Portugal's capital, Lisbon last month (Sept 22-24) for the second annual Global AMR Innovators Conference (GAMRIC). Organised by CARB-X, ESCMID, LifeARC, GARDP, BEAM Alliance, AMR Solutions and Boston University, this year's conference was held as pressure on the global health system intensifies.

In recent years, declining vaccination rates and increasing AMR have coincided with a constriction in global health funding, headlined by the closure of USAID. Resources available for AMR, pandemic preparedness, infectious diseases and global

health security are increasingly constrained, and the message at GAMRIC was clear. As CEO and Co-Founder of the AMR Strategic Coalition, Jomana Musmar stressed, the community must ADAPT, ADAPT, ADAPT!

Not only adapting, but responding with strengthened resolve

GAMRIC showed that the global AMR community is not only adapting but responding with strengthened resolve. The World Health Organization's Valeria Gigante* declaring that the AMR community does what it does best: turn a crisis into solutions.

The conference itself provided a powerful visual metaphor for this new era. Held in a repurposed hotel parking garage, the venue was a striking demonstration of innovation, practicality and resourcefulness. It was a reminder that meaningful outcomes do not require lavish settings. Instead, they require collaboration, creativity and a shared commitment to solving urgent problems.

In many respects, the venue captured the mood of the conference. The global AMR community recognises the realities of the current funding environment and is indeed, actively adapting to them.

Across sessions, discussions repeatedly returned to a common theme: finding efficiencies through integration and alignment. There was growing recognition that research, product development, public health policy, regulatory science and commercialisation should be better aligned if we are to accelerate the development and adoption of desperately needed antimicrobials, diagnostics, vaccines and other infectious disease countermeasures.

Integrated approach is becoming a necessity

And this integrated approach is becoming a necessity rather than a preference. The constrained funding environment necessitates duplication be minimised, efforts coordinated, and researchers, industry, regulators, public health agencies, investors and funders working together toward common objectives from the earliest stages of development.

A key concept capturing this was the critical importance of Target Product Profiles (TPPs) to guide the entire innovation pathway. Throughout the conference, it was evident that many major funders are now using TPPs to inform investment decisions, prioritise opportunities and assess the likely real-world impact of proposed projects.

Strong TPPs help ensure that product developers are solving the right problems for the right populations. They encourage alignment between scientific ambition, clinical need, public health priorities, regulatory requirements and commercial realities. In doing so, they provide a common framework that enables different stakeholders to work towards the same goal.

Importantly, TPPs can also help determine which projects receive increasingly scarce funding. Highlighting the importance of a well-considered TPP was Radu Botgros of the European Medicines Agency (EMA), who stated: "A novel target that is irrelevant to priority pathogens is a publication, not a product."

Address priority pathogens, improve patient outcomes, strengthen health security

Scientific novelty remains important, but novelty alone is not sufficient. The ultimate objective is not simply to generate knowledge. It is to develop products that address priority pathogens, improve patient outcomes and strengthen health security. In a constrained funding environment, the gap between scientific excellence and public health relevance is becoming increasingly difficult to justify. Funders are seeking clear pathways to impact. Regulators are encouraging early engagement. Public health organisations want solutions that address identified priorities. Industry requires confidence that a product can ultimately reach patients.

TPPs provide the mechanism to align these expectations. GAMRIC also showed a willingness of organisations to collaborate. There was a shared understanding that no single organisation can solve the AMR challenge alone, and the current environment has reinforced the importance of partnerships.

Strategic partnerships allow organisations to share risk, leverage complementary expertise, avoid duplication and maximise the impact of available funding. This was evident not only in presentations but also in conversations occurring in hallways, networking sessions and side meetings throughout the conference.

These interactions reinforced the importance of maintaining strong international networks and ensuring that countries such as Australia remain connected to global discussions surrounding AMR innovation and infectious disease preparedness.

GAMRIC 2026 – a reality check and a source of optimism

For those working within the AMR ecosystem, GAMRIC 2026 offered both a reality check and a source of optimism.

The reality is that funding constraints are likely to persist at least in the near-term. The sector cannot rely on ever-increasing investment to drive progress. Success will depend on prioritisation, strategic alignment and efficient use of resources.

The optimism comes from seeing how the global community is responding.

Successes were also shared. CARB-X, celebrating its 10-year anniversary, clearly demonstrates the value of incubators and accelerators to advance the most promising research. An independent review of its effectiveness showed that innovations have a five times greater chance of reaching the clinic with CARB-X support, both through non-dilutive funding and expert advice, than without.

These lessons are particularly relevant to Biointelect Venturer, which also combines non-dilutive funding with expert commercialisation support, helping Australian innovators make informed development decisions and progress towards investment readiness.

In the spirit of collaboration, it was also exciting to present a poster in partnership with AUScelerate, detailing how the Australian Antimicrobial Resistance Network (AAMRNet), a public-private, multistakeholder network has effectively impacted Australian government policy around equitable access to antibiotics. With limited access to antibiotics being not only a problem for low- and middle-income countries, policy reform is urgently needed in countries with smaller populations like Australia to ensure patient access to the safest and most effective therapies.

By strengthening the evidence base and building consensus among stakeholders, AAMRNet secured clear recommendations in government reports calling for the implementation of a subscription-style reimbursement fund, based on the successful UK model.

Collaboration – one of the most powerful tools available

GAMRIC demonstrated that innovation is not solely about new technologies. It is also about new ways of working. It is about bringing together research, industry, public health and regulatory communities around a common vision, ensuring that limited resources are directed towards the areas of greatest need and greatest impact.

Most importantly, it is about recognising that collaboration remains one of the most powerful tools available to us.

Next year, GAMRIC will be held in Bengaluru, India. This is a significant move, as it takes the conference out of Europe for the first time, and importantly, closer to where the AMR burden is highest.

Andrew Bowskill, Partnership and Stakeholder Lead at Biointelect Venturer in Australia