

## Medicine beyond frontiers

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### Emerging Infectious Diseases Beyond 2001

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Three major causes to most of the emerging infectious diseases include zoonoses, diseases caused by opportunistic agents follow increasing trend of immunocompromised individuals mainly in relation with the HIV/AIDS pandemic and diseases caused by drug resistance. The occurrences of new emerging zoonotic diseases can be expected in the future as the continuous alteration of the environment and the establishment of human settlements in formerly uninhabited areas favours the emergence of diseases whose agents may have remained for centuries for centuries in nature. Considering the wide span of animal species involved and the usually complex natural history of the pathogens concerned, the effective control of zoonoses poses a real challenge to public health.

Tuberculosis has become the leading cause of death among people with HIV infection, accounting for about a third of AIDS deaths worldwide. Escalating tuberculosis cases rate over the past decade in many countries is largely attributable to the HIV epidemic. HIV/AIDS surveillance, prevention and control are obviously important for the control of opportunistic and other diseases occurring in HIV/AIDS patients.

Control of drug - resistance is a complex multi - factorial problem which requires collaboration across many different constituencies. Unnecessary prescriptions should be discouraged and the many uses of anti- infective drugs outside the field of human medicine need to be reviewed for their potential to contribute to the impact of drug - resistance on human health.