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GLOBAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME TO TACKLE ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE:
MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE (MOOC) ON ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP

18th November 2014, Scotland - The University of Dundee, working in collaboration with the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC), is set to offer its first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) after signing a partnership agreement with the FutureLearn platform.

MOOCs are web-based, free-access learning courses that offer university-level courses. Dundee and BSAC’s first course will be on antimicrobial stewardship – a global education programme for healthcare professionals. The eight week course will launch on FutureLearn in September 2015, and will be repeated regularly. Learners can register their interest in the first run of the course from today - https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/antimicrobial-stewardship.

The announcement of this project in advance of European Antibiotic Awareness Day on 18 November reinforces the need for urgent action to reduce antibiotic resistance through education of healthcare professionals, patients and public. The World Health Organisation identifies antimicrobial stewardship as one of the most important key interventions in combating antimicrobial resistance, a global problem that is increasingly affecting healthcare professionals’ ability to treat infections – both common and complex.

The free Antimicrobial Stewardship course on FutureLearn will enable healthcare professionals to understand what stewardship is and how it can be applied in practice. Participants will interact with colleagues globally and develop skills that will support responsible prescribing, improve infection control practices and improve patient outcomes within their own specific health care locality. The course is designed to meet the needs of practitioners across the globe in differing health care system and settings.

Karl Leydecker, Vice-Principal for Learning & Teaching at the University said this “Our purpose as a University is to transform lives locally and globally, and a MOOC centred on a global healthcare issue such as antimicrobial resistance and antibiotic use, is one way we can do that.” He continued “This is an exciting development for the University and we are already working on offering further courses with FutureLearn.”

Simon Nelson, Chief Executive of FutureLearn said, “I’m delighted that in welcoming the University of Dundee to the FutureLearn partnership, we can also offer a platform to connect healthcare professionals around the world to discuss the critical issue of antibacterial resistance, and to disseminate vital information from the University and BSAC. This course will be an important addition to our growing portfolio of healthcare courses and we look forward to working with the University and bodies like the BSAC to create more topical programmes for our global community of learners.”
Professor Dilip Nathwani, President Elect of BSAC, Honorary Professor of Infection at the University of Dundee and Consultant Physician in NHS Tayside said “Free online courses offer an innovative way to educate healthcare professionals across the globe on the issue of antimicrobial resistance and how we can best tackle it, including making better and more effective use of antibiotics - the concept of antimicrobial stewardship. The course will be developed by a training faculty comprising experts from different professional societies and organisations internationally, and this diversity of experience and skills will ensure we address both generic and local training needs. We want to deliver a multifaceted and interactive course that aims to meet the needs of a broad range of health care professionals and policy makers that will be free at the point of access.” He continued: “I am delighted to be participating in a debate at Scottish Parliament on the 18th November. Hosted by Jim Eadie MSP and organised by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society in Scotland the debate New Antibiotics, Better Antibiotics, Better Use of Antibiotics offers a perfect opportunity to speak about the importance of global education such as that that this MOOC will deliver.”

Tracey Guise, Chief Executive Officer for the British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, said “The Society is delighted to be collaborating with Dundee in the development of this landmark course on FutureLearn. We have been aware for a long time that there are a lot of institutions investing time, energy and expertise in delivering education on antimicrobial resistance to their local communities. The MOOC will harness this expertise and produce a global course, allowing local resources to be directed at delivering stewardship programmes rather than designing and continually updated them. We see this as a resource that has the potential to offer significant improvements in global healthcare.”

Professor Peter Davey, Lead for Clinical Quality Improvement in the University’s Medical School said, “This course will help deliver examples of best practice to an international audience, particularly those involved in healthcare or with prescribing responsibilities, but also for those in the general public who simply want to learn more about the issues.”

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Antimicrobial resistance directly contributes to 23,000 deaths annually in the EU alone and is considered so important that in 2013 the World Economic Forum placed antimicrobial resistance on the global risk register alongside terrorism and global warming. In addition there are very few new antibiotics in development and although there are initiatives in place to regenerate antibacterial drug discovery and development it will be many years if not decades before these efforts bear results. It is essential therefore that the effectiveness of existing antibiotics is protected.

The University of Dundee is internationally recognised for the quality of its teaching and research and has a core mission to transform lives across society.

Dundee has particular strengths in life sciences and medical research. The College of Life Sciences at Dundee is one of the largest and most productive Life Sciences research institutes in Europe and has been recognised in the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council Excellence with Impact Awards for 'Greatest Delivery of Impact'.

The School of Medicine is among the top-rated in the UK and hosts research expanding from “the cell to the clinic to the community”.

The University is the central hub for a multi-million pound biotechnology sector in the east of Scotland, which now accounts for 16% of the local economy.

More than 17,000 students are enrolled at Dundee, helping make the city Scotland’s most student-friendly. With high-quality teaching, world-leading research, and a £200 million investment in a compact, friendly campus with an unrivalled position in the
heart of the city centre, the University of Dundee has been rated number one in Scotland and in the UK Top 10 for the past five years in the Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey.

See [www.dundee.ac.uk](http://www.dundee.ac.uk) for further details

The **British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC)** is an inter-professional organization with over 40 years of experience and achievement in antibiotic education, research and leadership and is dedicated to saving lives through appropriate use and development of antibiotics now and in the future. BSAC publishes the Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, the leading international journal in its field, and leads Antibiotic Action, a UK led global initiative that seeks to ensure effective antibiotics are researched, discovered and developed for all who need them. The Society engages with a wide range of stakeholders to improve and promote understanding of antimicrobials, including peer organizations, parliamentarians, policy-makers, students and healthcare trainees, scientists, researchers and journalists. [www.bsac.org.uk](http://www.bsac.org.uk)

**FutureLearn** is private company wholly owned by The Open University, with the benefit of over 40 years of their experience in distance learning and online education. FutureLearn has 40 partners from the UK, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, including many of the best UK and international universities, as well as institutions with a huge archive of cultural and educational material, such as the British Council, the British Library, the British Museum, and the National Film and Television School. FutureLearn also works with range internationally renowned organisations - from professional bodies such as the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), to businesses like the BBC and Marks & Spencer, to the UK Government. [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)

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