WHO guidelines on Antibiotics

Why in news?

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World Health Organisation has revised the antibiotics classes in its list of essential medicines.

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What is the current move?

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- WHO’s guidance classifies antibiotics into different categories.
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- A first-line ‘access’ group of antibiotics should be available at all times.
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- Drugs that are placed under a ‘watch’ category are second choice.
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- Drugs that are classified as ‘reserve’ should be deployed as a last resort.
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- Under this graded approach some medicines are reserved for the most resistant microbes.
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- This can stop their misuse as broad-spectrum treatments.
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What is the need?

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- Antimicrobial resistance is the phenomenon of bacteria becoming resistant even to the most potent drugs.
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- The prescription of antibiotics is often guided by such factors as patient demand, competing alternative treatment systems, and even financial incentives.
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- The Indian Council of Medical Research issued a warning two years ago, that resistance to antibiotics was found in 50% of patients.
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- The current move is a welcome step in the global initiative to push back against antimicrobial resistance.
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- A large number of infants were dying due to infections that did not respond to treatment.
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- The revised WHO classification can mitigate the problem if the many issues associated with use of the drugs can be monitored and regulated.
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What should be done?

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- Access to speedy and accurate diagnosis is equally important in order to deploy the correct antibiotic early.
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- While the medical community can be sensitised to its responsibility to prevent antimicrobial resistance, it will take enlightened policies on housing, sanitation and hygiene education to prevent new infections and the spread of disease-causing organisms.
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Source: The Hindu

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