



Roy Robins-Browne
President of ASM

When I, a fresh young medical graduate, announced my decision to specialise in pathology my senior colleagues were impressed, because pathology is a 9-to-5 job that pays well. However, when I added that I was planning to sub-specialise in microbiology, they questioned my sanity. Didn't I know that infectious diseases had been conquered by the twin forces of immunisation and antimicrobials?

Fast forward 40 years to the present, and we see that infectious diseases remain amongst the most important causes of morbidity

and mortality in humans and animals, and that resistance to antimicrobials is a major health concern. The problem of resistance is so dire that in September this year, the General Assembly of the United Nations saw fit to hold a high-level meeting to highlight the problems posed by antimicrobial resistance and to express support for the World Health Organization's blueprint to tackle this problem (<http://www.un.org/pga/71/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/2016/09/Draft-AMR-Declaration.pdf>). This was only the fourth time the UN General Assembly has met to address a health issue, a fact that underscores its seriousness.

This issue of *Microbiology Australia* is the result of a timely and successful collaboration between the ASM and our UK sibling: The Microbiology Society. Several articles cogently illustrate the continued importance of infectious diseases, exemplified by emerging and re-emerging infections, antimicrobial resistance, and the globalisation of infections through travel and trade. The remarkable malleability and adaptation of infectious agents that are illuminated by these articles will ensure that infections continue to be a major field of medicine and health research for many years to come.

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