ALERT: Don't miss Frontline tonight on PBS: Hunting the Nightmare Bacteria

By ACSH Staff — October 22, 2013

[1]ACSH advisor Dr. David Shlaes, a world-renowned expert on

antibiotics and the bacteria that are increasingly resistant to them, encourages all of us to watch
Frontline tonight at 10 EST. They are covering a topic that you never see on TV.

Dr. Shlaes comments in his blog called Antibiotics - The Perfect Storm [2], October is National
Breast Cancer Awareness month here in the US. Breast cancer kills about 39,000 women each
year. Antibiotic resistance probably kills about the same number (in spite of a completely
underestimated number of 23,000 from the CDC recently). Do we have an antibiotic resistance
awareness day? Do we wear red armbands and run in the parks or march in Washington or have
local parades to promote research on antibiotic resistance? Do we pay the same price for
antibiotics (that work) that we do for cancer therapies (that frequently don't)?

Shlaes, who was a consultant for the show, has seen it and, he says, While not perfect it does do
its job of informing the general public about a topic they know little about. I give them a B.

We strongly urge you to tune in tonight.

On a clearly related note, this football season, the NFL has had three documented cases among
the Tampa Bay Buccaneers of serious staph infection resistant to antibiotics: MRSA (methicillin-
resistant Staphylococcus aureus). While disturbing, in fact that figure is lower than a previous
episode of this serious infection considering athletes spend a significant amount of time together,
in close quarters, and are often subject to skin abrasions and injuries. MRSA, a superbug resistant
to antibiotics, affected eight players from the St. Louis Rams back in 2003, and has made
headlines in virtually every sport, The infection can be easily spread through soap sharing and
having previous cuts and open wounds. To remedy the current MRSA outbreak, a clean-up crew [3]
in hazmat suits, no less] has been called in to disinfect the Bucs locker room.

ACSH s Dr. Josh Bloom has written repeatedly about the upcoming antibiotic crisis, including a

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