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# **The role of CAM in reducing antimicrobial resistance**

CAM interest Group meeting, European Parliament, 1 April 2014  
by Dr Ton Nicolai, EUROCAM spokesman & coordinator

# Examples from actual practice

1. Patient seriously ill, affected by highly virulent bacteria  
Antibiotics are live saving

2. Patient having recurrent infections, many courses of antibiotics. No adequate solution. Also leading to antimicrobial resistance.

It's about **susceptibility**

CAM can diminish susceptibility, enhance the patient's level of health and resilience. No further infections.

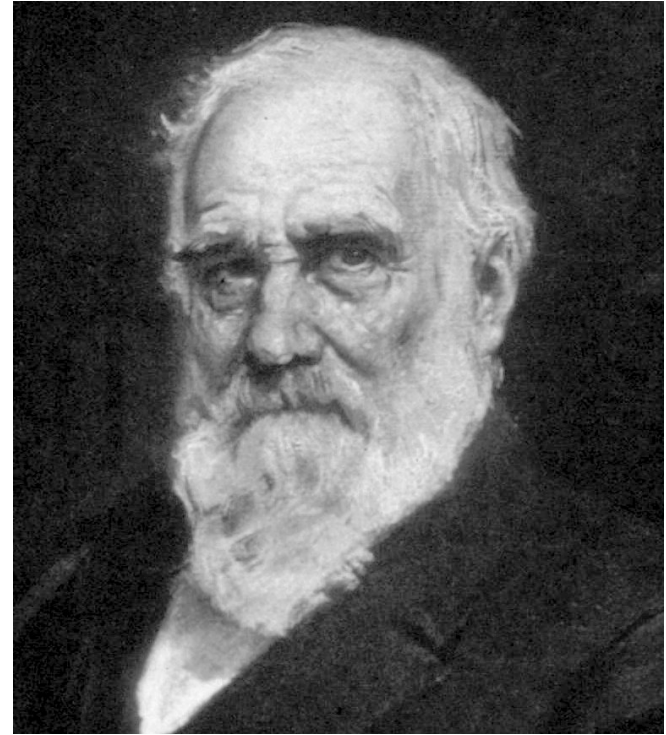
# Different models?

- A comparison of biomedicine and CAM could give a misleading impression that there are just differences in the technology and instruments used.
- **The essential difference however lies in the underlying paradigms, the basic concepts of and philosophical perspectives on health and disease.**

# Koch vs. Von Pettenkofer



Robert Koch (1843-1910):  
“bacteria are the smallest but most dangerous enemies of mankind”



Max Josef von Pettenkofer (1818-1901)  
“germs infect the most susceptible”  
(those with poor diet, constitution, etc.);  
and he drank a large cholera cocktail without falling ill.

# Pasteur vs. Bernard



Louis Pasteur (1822-1885)  
“microorganisms infecting animals  
and humans cause disease”



Claude Bernard (1813-1878) “diseases hover  
constantly above us, but they take root only  
when the terrain is ready to receive them”

# Antibiotics vs. immunity

- Pasteur's and Koch's perspectives, focused on combating disease by killing germs, have prevailed.
- Antibiotics have dramatically reduced illness and death from serious infectious diseases.
- Downside: more and more resistance to antibiotics.
- The importance of the host and the host's ability to repel invaders, a good working immune system, has been neglected.
- All research has been focused on the most potent way to kill the germs, hardly any research on how to raise the effectiveness of the immune system.

# How can CAM help reduce AMR?

- When it comes to the host's ability to repel invaders, CAM therapies have an important role to play.
- Most CAM therapies are not directed at combating a specific disease or killing germs, but at mobilising and stimulating the self-regulating capacity of the organism, thus increasing its resilience.
- Greater resilience means
  - swift and sustained recovery from infections
  - reduced susceptibility to future infections
  - lower use of antibiotics
- Herbal medicines have a special position: some of them are effective both in stimulating an immune response **and** in fighting infections.