

FACES OF AMR PROFILE STORIES



Dr. Rodney E. Rohde

“There are so many people working in labs and treating people every day to get ahead of the problem of antimicrobial resistance. I am hopeful that we can enlighten people around the world of how important preparedness funding, research and science is to address this slow burning pandemic.”

As a microbiologist, virologist and clinical laboratory expert, Dr. Rodney E. Rohde has spent his career researching bacteria, viruses and other medical and public health matters. He’s a professor and chair for the [Clinical Laboratory Science Program](#) in the College of Health Professions at Texas State University. His studies often inform and train future medical laboratory professionals. In short, these professionals are the doctor’s doctor.

As a result, Rohde has a unique lens into the trends that medical researchers are seeing and a bit of a looking glass into what’s coming. What he sees regarding antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has him concerned. That’s why he’s committed to [raising awareness](#) of this already out of control threat and supporting antimicrobial stewardship, which is aimed at measuring and improving how antibiotics are prescribed to reduce the chances for drug toxicity while maximizing antibiotic effectiveness. For Rohde, it’s personal.

His father had been dealing with an ongoing MRSA infection for many years as a result of multiple surgeries to address ankle issues. He believes the infection occurred through one of the implants. So, for more than two decades, Rohde became laser focused on this topic. Because of his personal experience – and professional background – Rohde was able to delve into the data and research the extent of the problem. He’s been shocked by what he’s found.

Rohde cites a [2019 CDC report on Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States](#) that states that “more than 2.8 million antibiotic-resistant infections occur in the United States each year, and more than 35,000 people die as a result.” Another [report from the UN](#) states that if no action is taken, “drug-resistant diseases could cause 10 million deaths each year by 2050.”

What’s worse is that, in many ways, the current Covid-19 pandemic poses additional risks for accelerating antibiotic resistance. Because antibiotics are being prescribed alongside some treatments when they may not be needed, and with an increase of Covid-19 hospital admissions, the potential for infections that may already be resistant to many antibiotics is becoming a reality.

Rohde believes a big part of addressing the slow burning pandemic of antimicrobial resistance lies in our ability to better educate our medical professionals and public on when, why and how long to use antibiotics. Through ongoing [presentations, articles and research](#) around this critical topic he is committed to doing just that in order for more to be done to combat the resilient threat of antimicrobial resistance.

