Introduction

Health Protection Scotland (HPS) produces a ‘Current and Emerging Threats (CET) Report’ providing a continuous assessment of HAI/AMR threats in/to NHSScotland. The format of this report includes a formalised risk assessment and gap analysis to determine if existing health protection programmes, national surveillance intelligence and infection prevention and control guidance are sufficient to mitigate emerging risks.

Methods

The CET report highlights international ‘threats’ identified in the published literature and a summary of all outbreaks and incidents reported to HPS. RSS feeds are set up on the following sites:
- CDC emergency preparedness and response: recent outbreaks and incidents
- Disease outbreak news
- Emerging infectious disease journal
- Eurosurveillance latest updates
- Morbidity and mortality weekly report
- Public Health England
- Health Protection Surveillance Centre
- WHO news
- MHRA and IRIC

Inclusion and exclusion criteria are applied to published threats:

Include:
- All Healthcare Associated Infection Incident Assessment Tool (HIIAT) assessed incidents and outbreaks reported to HPS during the surveillance period
- Any incidents or outbreaks associated with a novel pathogen or highly virulent pathogen
- An increased incidence of an existing threat e.g. norovirus
- A new strain, transmission mode, reservoir etc. of an existing pathogen
- Alerts issued regarding incidents or outbreaks associated with faulty or contaminated healthcare products e.g. intrinsically contaminated antiseptics

Exclude:
- Any threat that does not pose a risk within health or social care settings in Scotland

Results

Since the introduction of a risk assessment and gap analysis 48 ‘threats’ have been identified (Figure 1); 13 in the literature and 35 reported by NHSScotland. Of the 48 ‘threats’, 30 were assessed as ≥moderate risk; a gap analysis found that guidance, tools or other health protection programmes were already in place to mitigate the risk from these threats. Recently, three ‘HPS alerts’ have been issued in response to identified threats from plasmid-mediated antimicrobial resistance and the emerging fungal pathogen Candida auris. These alerts provide background information and detail recommended actions for clinical microbiologists and infection control teams in the event the threat is identified in their NHS Board.

Figure 1: Risk assessment of identified threats in both the literature and reported to HPS between October 2015 and October 2016, n=48.

Conclusion

The ongoing summary of ‘threats’ in/to NHSScotland provided by the CET report highlights service risk to NHSScotland. The addition of a risk assessment and gap analysis ensures NHSScotland is sufficiently prepared to respond to current and emerging threats including epidemics.