

Schmeckman's Ten Commandments of Antimicrobial Use

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| I | I am the lord of antimicrobial agents. Do not holdeth antipyretics before me. | Antimicrobial agents are not antipyretics. If you wish to treat a fever, do so, but not with antimicrobials. |
| II | Thou shalt remember the history and physical and keep it holy. | A good history and physical examination will be very useful in the diagnosis of infection. |
| III | Thou shalt not bear false witness upon the location of the host. | You need to distinguish between community and hospital acquired infections.
Ask about travel, jobs, pets, immunizations, other people with the same symptoms, etc. |
| IV | Thou shalt not forget the little things. | Certain organisms cause infection in certain organ systems. |
| V | Thou shalt knoweth thy neighbors. | Use antimicrobial agents with proven efficacy for the suspected or known infection. |
| VI | Thou shalt usest what worketh, and thou shalt not covet thy apothecary's new agents without a good reason. | When given a choice, avoid toxicity. |
| VII | Thou shalt remembereth <i>primum non nocerum</i> . | When the infection is established and susceptibilities known, try to use the narrowest spectrum agents.
After choosing for high efficacy and lowest toxicity, consider cost as a variable and try to aim low. |
| VIII | Thou shalt treateth what thou findeth. | Learn about the natural history of what you are treating and how it responds to therapy. |
| IX | Thou shalt not killeth thine own pharmacy budget. | |
| X | Thou shalt study thy adversary. | |

From Dr. Schmeckman in Bug of the Month series, Infections in Medicine, by Larry I. Lutwick MD FACP. Infectious Diseases, Professor of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at Western Michigan University School of Medicine