

IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING THE MEDIA IN REPORTING ON AMR

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BACKGROUND



- Growing evidence of drug resistance compelled the World Health Assembly to issue a number of resolutions, including the following:
 - WHA 51.15 made in May 1998 where the Assembly noted that “antimicrobial resistance is increasingly hampering treatment of infectious diseases as a result either of totally ineffective antibiotics currently available or of the high cost of “new generation” agents” and urged member states, among other things, to develop educational programmes for professional staff and the general public to encourage the appropriate and cost-effective use of antimicrobial agents.
 - WHA58.27 made in May 2005 in which the Assembly noted that, despite some progress, the strategy for containment of antimicrobial resistance has not been widely implemented, and urged member states, among other actions, to provide support for gathering and sharing of evidence on cost-effective interventions for prevention and control of antimicrobial resistance at national and local levels.
- In 2015, the global body came up with the AMR Global Action Plan which has become the standard for AMR national action plans.



GLOBAL ACTION PLAN ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

AMR GLOBAL ACTION PLAN

- The Global Action Plan proposes a whole-of-society approach to AMR.
- The plan states: “Antimicrobial resistance will affect everybody, regardless of where they live, their health, economic circumstances, lifestyle or behaviour. It will affect sectors beyond human health, such as animal health, agriculture, food security and economic development.”
- Therefore, everybody – in all sectors and disciplines – should be engaged in the implementation of the action plan, and in particular in efforts to preserve the effectiveness of antimicrobial medicines through conservation and stewardship programmes.

ZIMBABWE AMR NATIONAL ACTION PLAN



- The Zimbabwe AMR National Action Plan was finalized and approved in 2017.
- The plan also recognises the fact that AMR affects every person regardless of race, colour, religion, location, social standing etc.
- Consequently, it is important that every person in Zimbabwe is reached with accurate and relevant information on AMR and prevention methods.
- Out of the five pillars, Education and Awareness was placed at the centre of the national response out of the understanding that any efforts to contain AMR should start with awareness.
- It was proposed, therefore, that multiple stakeholders will be reached during the implementation of the plan with the main objective of raising awareness on AMR and secondarily, to achieve behavior change in the process.

National Action Plan

Education and awareness at the centre



ZIMBABWE ONE HEALTH ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2017-2022

Strategic Framework, Operational Plan, and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

September, 2017



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

ReAct

CDDEP

the centre for
Disease Dynamics,
Economics & Policy



THE ROLE OF JOURNALISTS IN DISEASE AWARENESS



- The history of pandemics shows that awareness has been raised through the media.
- With HIV for instance, the first report was in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report of the 5th June 1981, and thereafter the Press in the USA and elsewhere around the globe reported extensively on the pandemic.
- When triple therapy was endorsed as the most efficacious method of managing HIV in 1996, this was also widely reported in the Press leading to treatment advocacy and, ultimately, universal antiretroviral therapy coverage.
- Some pandemics which never reached Zimbabwe were widely reported in the local media, including the West African Ebola outbreak, the Zika virus pandemic and the SARS pandemic.
- The country also got to know about the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic before a single case was reported in Zimbabwe.
- Such media coverage helps the public to be aware of new or emerging diseases, their transmission and mode of treatment.

CHALLENGES WITH AMR AWARENESS



- Unlike most diseases or pandemics which the media has reported on, AMR poses a number of challenges.
- The condition does not manifest in physical symptoms, hence one is not aware that they have developed resistance until they have to take particular medication.
- Resistance can only be positively detected through a laboratory test. In our settings, antimicrobial sensitivity tests are not done routinely, hence many people who have developed resistance do not get to know about it.
- Patients who have developed resistance may eventually die from the disease or condition they are suffering from without being aware that the secondary cause of death was the resistance to the therapy prescribed.
- AMR has many routes of transmission and it is almost impossible to determine the epidemiology of its transmission. The strong link between animal health and human health makes it difficult also to determine the source of particular resistant strains.
- The concept of AMR is very difficult to communicate to the general public because of the lack of scientific terms in indigenous languages, and low health literacy among the general public.

THE AMR CONUNDRUM



- In the USA, more than 2.8 million antibiotic-resistant infections occur each year, and more than 35,000 people die as a result.
- In Europe, between 33,000 and 37,000 deaths occur annually from AMR, and an amount of EUR 1,5 billion is estimated to be lost annually in healthcare costs and lost productivity.
- The Jim O'Neill study estimates that, by 2050, AMR will be responsible for 10 million deaths annually and cost the global economy up to US\$100 trillion.
- Statistics show that AMR is growing in resource-limited settings such as Zimbabwe but no comprehensive surveillance and economic studies have been conducted to assess its health and economic impact.
- Ironically, in the light of these developments, there is very little awareness on AMR at all relevant levels, including the general public, farmers, policymakers and patients.
- Due to the relative “benign” character of AMR as well as competing health priorities, such as HIV, TB, malaria, maternal and gynecological conditions and non-communicable diseases, AMR seems distant and unthreatening.
- In the meantime, we are sitting on a huge ticking bomb.

SNAPSHOT OF AMR IMPACT

GLOBAL

A failure to address the problem of antibiotic resistance could result in:



10m
deaths
per year
by 2050

Costing
\$100
trillion
in economic output

The Issue:

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) occurs when microorganisms change with exposure to antimicrobial drugs (such as antibiotics, antifungals and antivirals). Microorganisms that develop AMR are sometimes referred to as “superbugs”.

- In 2014, the WHO reported that AMR “is no longer a prediction for the future, it is happening right now in every region of the world and has the potential to affect anyone, of any age, in any country...[AMR] is a major threat to public health.”

According to the CDC, the annual U.S. impact from drug-resistant infections includes over 2.8 million illnesses – over 35,000 of which result in death.

- Drug resistant infections cost the US \$20-25 billion in excess direct health expenditures, with another \$35 billion in additional costs to society for lost productivity.

The crisis is being exacerbated by the fact that US scientific research and development (R&D) has largely shifted away from investment in new antimicrobials to combat these infections due to the unique scientific, regulatory and economic challenges of antimicrobial R&D.

- Less than 5% of pharmaceutical investment goes towards antimicrobial development.
- Only 1 of the top 50 top drug companies in the world is still developing antimicrobials.
- Over 95% of the products in development are being developed by smaller companies – like those that comprise the AWG.

Dr. Janet Woodcock, Director of the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research for the FDA testified in a hearing before the House E&C Committee, Subcommittee on Health in September 2014: “The decline in antibacterial drug research and development (R&D) in the private sector, at a time when serious antibiotic resistant infections are on the rise, is a tremendous public health problem, resulting in a very serious unmet medical need.”

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?



- Awareness on AMR and its potential threat to national and global public health is needed at all levels in order to reach all people.
- Currently, the Education & Awareness Technical Working Group is working on the National AMR Communication and Awareness Strategy which proposes to develop appropriate messages and disseminate accurate information on AMR to diverse populations.
- It would be important that the messages are disseminated widely in Zimbabwe using all available forms of media, including radio, television, newspaper, social media, billboards and word of mouth.
- Journalists will therefore be important in disseminating these messages due to its access to the mass media.
- The role of journalists in the AMR response is well recognised, and a number of training initiatives have already been rolled out.
- This includes the initiative by the Zimbabwe Association of Church Related Hospitals (ZACH) in 2015-6.

ZACH AWARD PRESENTATION



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The Role of Journalism on YouTube: Audience Engagement with 'Superbug' Reporting

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Full Text [PDF \(free download\)](#) Views: **2446** Downloads: **1741**

Abstract Journalism has gradually become 'normalized into social media', and most journalists use social media platforms to publish their work (Bruns, 2018). YouTube is an influential social media platform, reaching over a billion users worldwide. Its extensive reach attracts professional and amateur video producers who turn to YouTube to inform, entertain and engage global publics. Focusing on YouTube, this study explores the place for journalism within this media ecology. This study uses a mixed-method approach to examine forms of audience engagement to YouTube videos about antimicrobial resistance (AMR), or so called "superbugs", caused by overuse and misuse of antibiotics. The analysis focuses on the most viewed YouTube videos about AMR between 2016 and 2018, and compares engagement themes expressed in comments to journalistic videos with popular science videos. The most viewed videos about AMR on YouTube are professionally produced educational popular science videos. The qualitative analysis of 3,049 comments identifies seven main forms of high-level engagement, including expressions of emotions, blame and calls for action. This study shows that journalism plays an important role on YouTube by generating audience discussions about social and political accountability. Our findings demonstrate that journalistic videos were associated with propositions for political, economic and social/lifestyle actions.

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KENYA

The role of the media in the fight against antibiotic resistance: Antibiotic Awareness Week 2019

19 November 2019

Author: Victory Kamthunzi



The aim of the event was to capacity build members of the press in that report on health-related issues on antibiotic resistance, as the media is a critical source of information for the public and policymakers. Photo: ©AFIDEP

Successful antimicrobial resistance media training in Kenya

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2017-06-08 **Beginning of May, ReAct and EPN in partnership with the AMR Media Network Kenya conducted a one-day media training on antimicrobial resistance. The purpose was to raise awareness among journalists on antimicrobial resistance as a major public health challenge. The day was hosted by the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI).**





THANK
YOU!

