



REPORTING ON AMR

CHALLENGES AND HIGH POINTS OF AMR REPORTING IN ZIMBABWE

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THE 'UNDOING' IN AMR REPORTING

- ▶ Multiple messages using different terminologies to refer to AMR are leaving many people confused and unsure how the problem affects them.
- ▶ Some media messages promote the idea that we are nearing an antibiotic "apocalypse" that will affect the entire planet; others emphasize the impact on vulnerable populations.
- ▶ Some public campaigns urge people not to use antibiotics irrationally, while others advocate against the overuse of antibiotics in food-animal production. In addition, there have been various predictions on how AMR resistance will affect mortality, the economy, and the environment.
- ▶ Media coverage is often dominated by stories about specific outbreaks of drug-resistant infections, which makes it difficult for the public to see these stories as all part of one issue.
- ▶ Similarly, the multiple frames used to convey the potential impact of AMR complicate what is already a complex issue.

WHY WE NEED TO REPORT ON AMR

- ▶ While antibiotic resistance has gained political traction in recent years, few concrete steps have been taken, in part because the public do not see the true scale and severity of AMR and are not championing the issue.
- ▶ And one of the reasons for the lack of public engagement is that the media hasn't effectively communicated the dangers of AMR in a way that makes sense or conveys the urgency of the problem.
- ▶ As journalists, we need to rethink the way we talk about AMR to increase public understanding and engagement and promote action by policy makers.



HIGH POINTS OF AMR REPORTING IN ZIM

- ▶ AMR messaging has been be framed as a problem that undermines modern medicine—a cross-cutting threat that isn't just one of several important health issues, but one that could return society to a time when common infections kill and routine surgeries can no longer be performed.
- ▶ Fundamentals of AMR should be explained succinctly, using non-technical terms. The public should understand that bacteria, not individuals, develop resistance, and that human overuse of antibiotics is playing a part in accelerating the problem.



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- ▶ Emphasize that drug-resistant infections are a universal issue that affects everyone, not just certain populations. Making AMR a personal issue, increases the sense of personal jeopardy and enhances the idea that it needs to be addressed. Personal stories of people affected by drug-resistant infections should be highlighted.
- ▶ Communicators should focus on the here and now, rather than on projections of what will happen in the next 20 to 30 years, which can lull people into thinking that immediate action isn't necessary. We need to make it clear that AMR is currently having a significant impact—and that this impact will become increasingly severe-if action is not taken.

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- ▶ AMR messaging should be framed as a solvable problem and include clear, specific calls to action, which will be different depending on the audience.
- ▶ Positioning the problem as solvable encourages engagement with the issue and gives cause for optimism. This prevents AMR from appearing to be an intractable problem—which can often lead to people disengaging or dismissing an issue.





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- ▶ ZACH conducted a media sensitization and training workshop and held media awards for AMR reporting for both print and broadcast media as a way to encourage journalists to report on AMR issues conscientising the general public of the growing health threat.

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