TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR HEALTH

You too ... can take action!

Tackling antimicrobial resistance
a story of a community playing its part

Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network
Antimicrobial treatment is a major lifesaving intervention for infectious diseases but Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is rapidly reducing the effectiveness of antimicrobials. As a result, many first line treatments for diseases such as malaria, TB and opportunistic infections of AIDS are no longer effective and the cost of care is inevitably increased.

The spread of antimicrobial resistance is a global problem with particularly dire consequences for Africa which is grappling with high levels of infection in the face of limited resources. Poor quality medicines, inappropriate use of medicines, as well as poor hygiene and waste management, all facilitate the development of resistance. This means treatments with antimicrobials such as antibiotics, antifungals and antivirals are no longer effective.

The containment of antimicrobial resistance requires an increased awareness by all actors in health, including the public, as well as collective action. These comic strips were developed by EPN to provide information to the general public, through graphic art. This material is also available in French and Kiswahili.

Storylines: Donna Kusemererwa, Gelliann Omondi, Elisabeth Goffin, Anke Meiburg
Design and layout: Elisabeth Goffin
Illustrations: David Radoli

EPN wishes to thank its partners for supporting the development of these strips.

© Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network 2015
Reproduction of this publication for educational and any other non-commercial purposes is authorized without prior written permission from the copyright holder and is encouraged, provided the work is accurately reproduced and appropriately credited. Reproduction of this publication for commercial purposes is prohibited without prior written permission of the copyright holder.

EPN will be happy to receive any feedback on this publication.
Tackling antimicrobial resistance - Incomplete doses

At the local market

Did they do a test to find out what she was suffering from?

No... why?

For such serious conditions it’s important to find out the cause. Then you can be given the correct medicine.

Tackling antimicrobial resistance - Community awareness

How is your baby?

Her breathing seemed better after I gave her the syrup, but now she is sick again.

Tackling antimicrobial resistance - Incomplete doses

It’s also important to take all the medicine, especially if they are antibiotics.

Ah, really? When I feel better, I keep the remaining medicine for the next time I am unwell.

Obi’s drug shop at the busy trading centre

Ah, you know these women, they come here, they don’t have money, what do I do?

But you are a professional, you should tell them the right thing to do.

No, you should always take the full dose, otherwise the germ that made you sick will become resistant.

Resistant? What is that?

Imagine, even my husband does not know about resistance. I shall inform him.

It’s like, when you have malaria and chloroquine does not work anymore, then the germ has become resistant.

Taking incomplete doses promotes the development of resistance. Please think of the future of our community.

I could but it will mean no sales. Is a man to go hungry?

My brother, I heard from my sisters in the village that you are selling 2 tablets of the new medicine for malaria while the government says adults should get 24.
Tackling antimicrobial resistance - Incomplete doses

My brother, why was your shop closed all of last week?

I was at the funeral of my sister’s baby in the village.

That’s terrible. What happened?

The baby had malaria. My sister took her to a nearby clinic and she was given an injection. She was to return the following day. The next day the baby seemed better and so my sis did not take her back. One week later the fever was back and much worse. The baby died as she was being rushed to the clinic.

Now I realize how dangerous incomplete doses are. You were right, Mama A. Imagine my niece is dead.

I am sorry to hear about your loss. But you can turn this tragedy into benefit for society.

You know incomplete doses also contribute to the development of resistance. Resistance affects not just those using medicines badly, but all of us.

You are right...I need to play my part. From now on, this business of half doses, no more! Thank you, Mama A!

You too... can take action!
Tackling antimicrobial resistance - Hospital acquired infections

At the GSH Pharmacy

I wonder how our hospital is doing on hand hygiene, infection control and all the things this EPN is proposing.

Madam pharmacist!

Headmaster, what’s wrong? Come in.

The next morning

Good morning Headmaster. How is your wife doing?

She had a restless night.

Sorry to hear that. Mama Sara, how are you this morning?

Not good. My wound is very painful and I had a fever that persisted all night long.

Things are bad for me, my wife had an operation a few days ago but it looks like she has become even more sick. They say she has an infection.

Can it wait that long? Her condition seems serious.

They probably started her on another antibiotic already but let me check with the surgeon. She will inform the ward nurses on the best course of action for your wife as you wait.

We now have the antibiotic the surgeon prescribed. The nurses should be here soon to give it to you.

That’s good news. Hopefully she will respond better to that one. It’s been tough.

I was told yesterday that the infection should respond to this particular antibiotic. The lab was able to do the necessary tests.

Thank God. This pain is too much, after surgery now this, I can’t wait to get better.

Thank you. It would be difficult for me to go and look for it anyway. I have no one to leave on the ward.

Imagine, here is an apparently clear case of a hospital acquired infection. Looks like our infection control measures may be wanting... I need to inform the director.

I am so sorry, these infections do happen.

But why? The wards look quite clean and I always thought theatres are sterile.

Don’t you know it’s possible for germs to get into the wound if people who touch it don’t have clean hands?

Indeed, but you could also have gotten the infection some other way. We may need to review our practices. I have to get back. Get well soon.
A quiet day at the Good Samaritan Hospital

We would like to propose a new protocol that requires clinicians to wash their hands in between patient ward rounds.

At the GSH, a few weeks later

Outpatient Department

Wow, that’s ambitious! I didn’t realize how seriously you are taking the whole infection control campaign.

Look! Here’s one of the materials we developed for sensitization. We need to convince the clinicians that good hygiene is a cheap and effective way to ensure hospital acquired infection is kept to a minimum.

Yes, management decided to promote hand washing to reduce infection spread in our hospital.

Nurse Waja, congratulations, the new facilities look good!

You know about AMR? Unbelievable. Then you’ll be happy to know this is just one of several measures introduced for controlling AMR.

Very good. I will pass by when I have time to hear all the details.

Lower infections mean lower chances of resistance development, shorter hospital stays and a reduction in the cost of care.

Indeed, but knowledge is one thing and practice is another. Knowing the attitudes of some of the colleagues...I can only say you have an uphill task. Good luck!

Wonderful. Reducing infection will go a long way in our fight against Antimicrobial Resistance.

Let me see someone argue against the need for that!
Tackling antimicrobial resistance - Substandard medicines

For sure the quality can’t be right and when poor quality medicines are used for treatment, the disease will quickly become resistant. The medicine does not work on the patient. I sold my house to buy antibiotics to cure my son. I have no money to buy medicines. I thought I was selling the house for anti-microbial resistance. You are now doing nothing. Go and find the global fund. They have money for malaria, TB and AIDS medicines. This is a money line for sure.

What is happening to this country? It is complete chaos! I can hear of the Global Fund. They have money for malaria, TB and AIDS medicines. This is a money line for sure. I thought I was doing something. You are now doing nothing. Go and find the Global Fund. They have money for malaria, TB and AIDS medicines. This is a money line for sure.
We have to inform the authorities, medicine is being manufactured in this village. By Mr. Entrepreneur.

What? We have to get the police to arrest this dodgy character!

Did you tell us that substandard medicines could lead to development of antimicrobial resistance?

Officer, this is the place where we make the medicine. Do you have a license for your business?

We shall lock up this place and arrest you. You are charged with 2 offences: operating a pharmacy without a license and endangering the health of the public.

No problem, we can start here: we ensure water, soap and disinfectant are available for cleaning, and the staff have protective clothing and gloves to do their work well.

Officer, what will happen to me, I have turned against my own neighbour?

Not to worry, Mama A, you did the right thing and the law protects you. You will testify in court, this crook will be locked up in jail. Think of the lives you have saved!

Ah, yes I have learnt that there are certain antibiotics that treat specific illnesses.

Officer, are you going to be here to try and stop this place from manufacturing medicine?

Mama A you are back, good to see you.

Hope you have some time, I am anxious to hear the efforts you are making to combat resistance.

And here is our pharmacy.

I see it is well stocked!

Yes, the pharmacist ensures that quality medicines are available.

We also have strict guidelines so that prescribers use the right antibiotics according to the patient’s disease.

Thank you nurse Waja. This is very impressive.

I appreciate your interest. Community involvement helps us ensure that we keep our promise to provide quality health care.

There is our incinerator for burning hospital waste like used syringes and needles. We also have a placenta pit to dispose waste from the maternity and the labour wards.
Access to medicines
Addressing supply systems, medicine use, quality of medicines, pharmaceutical care and affordability

Professionalism and good governance
Institutional strengthening through capacity building and distribution of tools to impact governance
Training on pharmacy for health facility staff as well as provision of guidelines and standards to strengthen pharmacy practice

Campaign against antimicrobial resistance
Activities on rational use of antibiotics and implementation of hospital-based infection control interventions reached more than 500 health professionals in 9 countries in 2010.

HIV and AIDS
Treatment Literacy Guide for Church Leaders available in English and French.
EPN also offers Treatment Literacy Courses for Church Leaders on invitation from any church or other group.

Visit us: www.epnetwork.org