

Antimicrobial Awareness Campaign reaches School in Bangladesh

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World Health Organization (WHO) declared that Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is one of humanity's top 10 global public health threats. Although antimicrobial resistance emergence is a concern in all countries regardless of income level, Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), which included Bangladesh, bear a heavier burden. Key factors contributing to AMR include:

- **High level of antibiotic use and misuse.**
- **lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for humans and animals.**
- **Access to quality, affordable medicine, vaccine & diagnostics.**
- **lack of awareness and knowledge about antibiotics**

Also, LMICs, especially those in Africa and Asia, need more robust antimicrobial resistance surveillance systems. Lack of appropriate laboratory facilities, gaps in quality assurance, skilled personnel, laboratory supplies, and management of lab services are major challenges in this surveillance.



WHO Technical staff, DG-DGDA and Swedish Embassy high level officials with AMR Comic Book

Bangladesh celebrated World Antimicrobial Awareness Week, a global campaign held annually since 2015, to raise awareness of antimicrobial resistance worldwide and encourage best practices among the public, health workers, and policymakers to slow the development and spread of drug-resistant infections.

The Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) and WHO Bangladesh initiated school activities to raise antimicrobial awareness among children. This included an art competition, comic book distribution among the students [Class 6 to Class 10], and a pillow passing game for teachers to make the audience understand the AMR with fun activities. Cox's Bazar Model High School undertook the pilot for the AMR awareness activities on 21 November 2022 followed by other popular schools in the capital like Viqarunnisa Noon School & College, on 1 February 2023.

In these art competitions, class six to ten students were briefed about antimicrobial resistance, its importance, and how it contributes in combating AMR. The comic books were distributed among 481 students, and 404 participated in the art competition. Through this campaign, the children were motivated and expressed their understanding of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) through their arts. The 9 art competition winners in

Cox's Bazar Model High School got prizes and certificates from the District Controller (DC) and Director of DGDA on 22 November 2022. Later the winners of the campaign in Dhaka were also declared.

The AMR comic consisted of two parts. The first one is the story of two sisters: Tinu and Minu with Super bug. The story of Tinu and Minu conveys messages to stop antimicrobials resistance: medicines should be used correctly; take them only when prescribed by a registered physician; follow directions on treatment dosage and duration, even after the patient feels better; and don't share or use leftover antimicrobials to others.

The second part, "Thoughts of Tapa-Gopi," shows an earnest conversation between two chickens. The widespread use of antibiotics in agriculture and aquaculture has become another major factor driving antimicrobial resistance. The fast-growing demand for animal protein has increased the use of antimicrobials in the animal health sector. These drugs are used not only to treat and prevent infection but also to promote rapid growth. The antibiotic residue spreads into the soil and water from the animals' feces, which then helps antibiotic resistance to grow in nature.

Comics play pivotal role in engaging young students to communicate complex information on antimicrobial resistance in simple language. Through compelling storytelling and graphics, this method effectively raises awareness and promotes understanding of this important issue of antimicrobial resistance among the young students, the message will carry over to their families and promote awareness and health-consciousness around AMR.

Comic book link:

Bangla Version:

https://dgda.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dgda.portal.gov.bd/files/7ed84f7b_5aa0_41c9_a820_0d18dbbd638e/2022-12-06-17-20-e3bed3a1c57d56983e7cfc410ec3b5e0.pdf

English Version:

Few glimpses from the Antimicrobial Awareness School Campaign in Cox's bazar







Campaign in Dhaka



Major General Mohammad Yousuf, Director General of DGDA.



Ms. Kamrun Nahar, Principal, Viqarunnisa Noon School & College.











AMR themed pillow passing game among teachers:



