

Malawi AMR Strategy: some issues to consider during implementation

Prof. Alister C. Munthali

Centre for Social Research, University of Malawi

2nd Global NAMRIP symposium, Royal Suites, Kampala

4-7 March 2019

Introduction

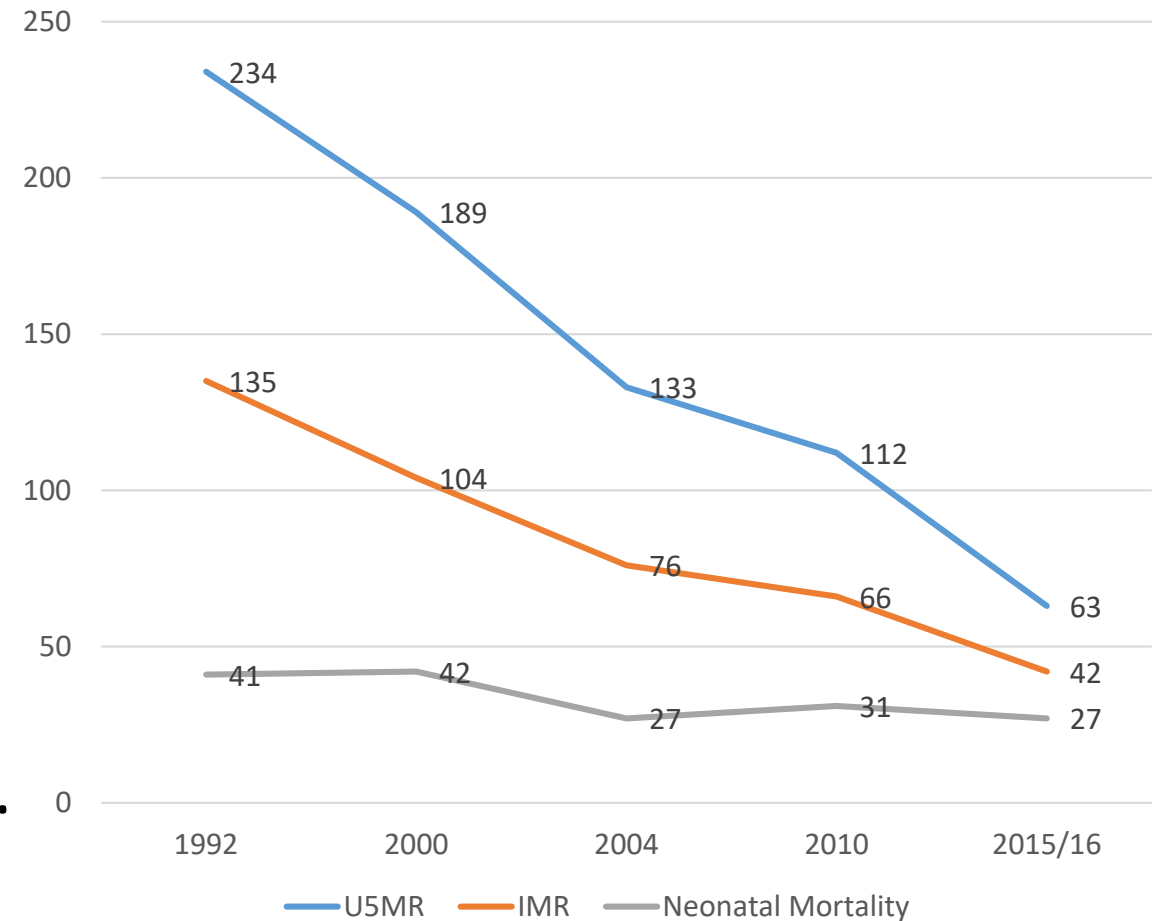
- There is widespread abuse of antimicrobial drugs in Malawi as is the case with other developing countries.
 - One can purchase antimicrobial drugs without any prescription from clinicians.
 - One purchases what he or she can afford even if it means purchasing less than the required dosage.
 - Antibiotics can be taken regularly not for the treatment of diseases but to 'prevent' diseases such as STIs.
 - There is also widespread use of antimicrobial drugs in agriculture and animals but it is yet to be quantified.
- The prescription of antimicrobial drugs is being done by laymen with no clinical background.
- Lack of awareness about AMR is an issue

Introduction

- The Pharmacy, Medicines and Poisons Board regulates the prescription and dispensing of medicines.
- The Pesticide Control Board regulates the use of pesticides.
- There is, however, an influx of antimicrobial drugs in Malawi and regulation is a challenge and this is happening mostly in both the formal and informal sectors.
- Antimicrobial resistance is a huge public health problem in Malawi; hence, there is a need to urgently address this.

Some health gains in Malawi

- Malawi has made significant progress in improving health status of Malawians.
- This has been demonstrated by the significant decrease in IMR, UFMR and MMR over the last 25 years.
- These gains might be eroded if AMR is not effectively addressed.



AMR plans

- The Global Action Plan (GAP) was endorsed by the WHA in 2015. Countries, including Malawi, which have developed their own AMR plans have been guided by the GAP and other documents provided by WHO.
- The objectives of Malawi's AMR plan are in line with the GAP as is the case with other countries.

Priority thematic areas for Malawi's AMR plan 2017-2022

- Malawi's Health Sector Strategic Plan II has also prioritized among other interventions the containment of AMR. AMR plan 2017-2022 details the interventions which will be implemented to address AMR.
- Priority thematic areas for the Plan
 1. Education and awareness.
 2. Surveillance and research.
 3. Infection prevention and care.
 4. Optimal use.
 5. Investment and sustainability.
- These are in line with the priorities as detailed in the GAP.

1. Education and awareness

- Create awareness about AMR targeting human health, animal health and agriculture and the environment.
- Incorporate AMR in both pre-service and in-service training programmes in health, veterinary and agriculture.
- Make AMR as part of continuous professional development.
- Introduce AMR in school curricula.

2. Surveillance and research

- Strengthen the national AMR surveillance system including in health, veterinary and agriculture.
- Incorporate AMR into existing surveillance systems.
- Map stakeholders involved in research and surveillance activities.
- Develop an AMR research agenda.
- Incorporate the AMR strategy into the National Health Research Agenda.
- Promote the sharing of data on AMR across human and animal health, agriculture and environmental sectors.

3. Infection prevention and control

- Implement infection prevention and control interventions including vaccination, sanitation, hand washing and food and water safety.
- Promote safe disposal of antimicrobial drugs.
- Ensure safety of health care and animal health workers.
- Promote good agricultural practices.
- Ensure workers safety during use of chemicals.
- Promote safe management of waste from health care, animal health, industry and agriculture.

4. Optimal use of antimicrobial drugs

- Build the capacity of national regulatory authorities such as the Pharmacy, Medicines and Poisons Board and the Pesticide Control Board.
- Strengthen legislation on dispensing and prescription of antimicrobial drugs.
- Promote good governance on the use of antimicrobial drugs.
- Strengthen supply chain systems.

5. Investment and sustainability

- Lobby and secure funding for the implementation of AMR plans.
- Build the capacity of MoH, other government ministries and departments to sustainably implement AMR plans.
- Participate in international collaborative research to support the development of new medicines, diagnostic tools and vaccines.
- Strengthen national and international collaboration on AMR.
- Strengthen drug resistance containment activities in disease control programmes.

Financing and implementation

- Funding from GoM, development partners and other sources.
- Implementation will be coordinated by the AMR National Coordinating Centre in MoH.
- The AMR plan has also identified a wide range of stakeholders who will participate in the implementation of the AMR plan including Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security; and Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining.

Issues

- The successful implementation of the AMR Plan will depend on the availability of human and financial resources.
- The need for flexibility in the implementation of AMR to incorporate evidence from research.
- There is a need for wide consultations in the development of interventions to address AMR-let us be innovative.
- There is a need to create awareness: this should be evidence based.
- Malawi needs to conduct a very comprehensive ethnographic study on the use and misuse of antimicrobial drugs in human and animal health, agriculture and the environment to inform programming.