

Dodoma based journalists trained on antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

By Polycarp Machira, Dodoma

SEVERAL journalists in Dodoma city have been trained on understanding the global pandemic antimicrobial resistance (AMR), thanks to Roll Back Antimicrobial Resistance Initiative (RBA Initiative), a non-governmental organisation whose aim is to fight the challenge.

AMR poses a major threat to everyday life and modern-day medicine where lives could be lost as a result of antibiotics not working as they should following improper use.

It is a growing problem nationally and globally that requires concerted efforts of a wide range of stakeholders to address it successfully. Experts argue that inappropriate use of antimicrobial medicines is among the main drivers of antimicrobial resistance.

RBA-Initiative has therefore embarked on awareness creation on AMR among several stakeholders including pupils and students in several schools in Dodoma Region, religious leaders, teachers, tri-cyclists (Bajaj), commuter bus drivers and journalists.

Officiating at the training for journalists here, Regina Richard, a pharmacist from the Ministry of State, President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government urged them to help spread education about AMR to the society, terming one of the growing health threats.

She said there is diversity in understanding the problem but a lot more need to be done to save the society, stating that some members of the public are not aware of the problem and its causes.

"It is unfortunate that some people unknowingly give animals antibiotics meant for human, beings, but this is one of the ways that lead to the problem" she said, calling on journalist to expose such people.

She also observed that living in dirty environment can lead to frequent use of antibiotics and in most cases, people take them without doctor's prescription while other mix traditional drugs with the antibiotics.

Regina added that there are also

some untrustworthy pharmacists who provide the drugs without following the procedure, and are only concerned about doing business, adding that journalists have a role to reveal such practitioners.

"It is estimated that bacterial AMR was directly responsible for 1.27 million global deaths in 2019 and contributed to 4.95 million deaths" she noted, adding that Tanzanians are not safe and more measures need to be put in place all stakeholders.

She thanked RBA-Initiative for the good work in spreading public education on AMR in the region. Oliver Minja, the organization's Programme Officer, noted, "Anybody can AMR and its effects irrespective of age, gender and physical ability, thus the need for all of us to action."

In her presentation, she noted that some of the fastest ways to get attacked include failure to complete doses as prescribed by doctors, wrong usage of drugs, and use of drugs without health expert's prescription, disposal of drugs in the environment and use of expired drugs.

She said AMR is costly as it takes over 20 years and billions of money to introduce a new drug into use once the existing ones have failed.

RBA-Initiative's Animal and Plant Coordinator, Israel Mwingira, on his part took the journalists through how improper use of antibiotics in animals can lead to AMR in human being.

He said antibiotics meant for human beings are completely from those for human use and cannot be used vice versa.

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