

# Affordability and accessibility of antimicrobial medicines in Bangladesh Market: Paving the way for Universal health coverage (UHC) and antimicrobial resistance combat

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## Background

In recent years, attention has focused on harnessing UHC reforms to accelerate AMR related gains. Since AMR is a health-system problem, UHC provides the best enabling framework to tackle AMR.<sup>1</sup>

Sustainable Access to Effective and Affordable Treatment of Infectious Diseases for All is essential for the functioning of all health systems. Antimicrobial resistance is seriously undermining health and threatening the quality and affordability of future healthcare. The increased burden of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) not only affects the affordability of healthcare on the national level, but also has a huge impact on national and individual healthcare expenditure. The possibility to treat infections however is essential for good quality care. Maintaining or creating Universal Health Coverage (UHC), without addressing AMR, therefore becomes most likely unfeasible or very complicated. AMR is a multi-sectoral challenge and requires work to be done on a very wide range of themes. It is projected that antimicrobial resistance could cause up to 10 million deaths by 2050 and makes healthcare unaffordable for many.<sup>1-3</sup>

Actions to ensure access to effective and affordable treatment of infections in the future should be addressed through large interventions in health-systems. An essential part of this is preventing infections and reducing creation and spread of antimicrobial resistance. Universal Health Coverage forms an essential basis for managing resistant infections in the future.<sup>4-8</sup>

## Objectives

The aim of this research was to assess and clear picture of the affordability, accessibility, their impact on universal Health Coverage and threats to Antimicrobial resistance.

## Methodology

More than a thousand community Pharmacies were visited in the last six months, unstructured questions were asked to pharmacists and afterwards I was able to attend dispensing as far as antimicrobial medicines are concerned, whether for self-medication or by prescription.

## Results

According to Bangladesh essential medicine list, antimicrobial medicines were affordable because not only by high industrial developments but also market competition among pharmaceutical industries with different brands. The difference of antimicrobial medicine price in village and the city were tiny like five to ten taka maximum and most of the cases they were exactly the same.<sup>9-11</sup> Antimicrobial medicines are accessible in Bangladesh by physical

means or by using online pharmacy, most of the pharmacies are able to provide those services especially city zones and because of high population, pharmacies are also found in villages which makes a good step in service delivery however huge portion of population do not aware the impact of self-medication with antimicrobial medicines and most of the cases antimicrobial medicines were taken without considering the course of the therapy as asked by the clients.<sup>12-16</sup>

## Conclusion and recommendations

It very fortunate that Antimicrobial medicines are affordable and accessible in Bangladesh which is a big step in achieving Universal Health Coverage however some restrictions on antimicrobial medicines is needed. Health professionals like pharmacists' training, public awareness on antimicrobial medicines for behaviour change and incorporation of the course in all university subjects is crucial to combat AMR using a multisectoral approaches. The sufficient amount of tablets should be given to the client. The explanations should be given and follow up as the way to combat for AMR without consideration of financial income for uncompleted dose.

Future research should focus on antimicrobial prescribing patterns, quality and safety on antimicrobial medicines for substandard and counterfeit purposes because of the intensity marketing forces and pharmaceutical industries.

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## Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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