„They eat it like sweets“

Perceptions of antibiotics and antibiotic use by patients, doctors and pharmacists in a district hospital in Kabul

Doris Burtscher, Rafael van den Bergh, Yasmine al-Kourdi, Celine Leto, Jennifer Velloza, Masood Nasim, Gbane Mahama, Catherine Van Overloop, Sahar Bajis, Sokhieng Au, Abdul Sattar
Vienna Evaluation Unit/OCB/LuxOR
OR Day Brussels May 2015
Objectives

• Knowledge and perception of antibiotics and antibiotic use
• What influences the choice of antibiotics from a doctor’s and patient’s perspective
• Health-seeking behaviour
• Perception of Ahmad Shah Baba hospital
• Doctor-patient-relationship and interaction
Methodologies

- 5 weeks field research in the OPD at ASB hospital
- 2 translators, 1 PI (medical anthropologist)
- Individual and group interviews (37 in total) and observations
- Interview participants: patients, caretakers, doctors, drug dispensers, MSF health promoters and private drug store owners
Data analysis

Qualitative content analysis

• Data were transcribed, coded (manual and using Nvivo) and categorised
• Validation of data was gained through triangulation with documents review
Study results: antibiotic perception

“orange pills” – Amoxicillin

- Cleaning the body
- Cleaning the blood
- Protecting and strengthening the body
“powder syrup” – Amoxicillin

- powerful and famous medication
- rapid-acting medication
Patients’ indications for AB use

- To kill/dry bacteria
- Treat infections and wounds
- Treat fever/coughing/sore throat/cold/diarrhea and vomiting
- To treat pneumonia and tuberculosis
- Women use AB after delivery
Health-seeking behaviour

- Self treatment and leftover drugs
- over-the-counter treatment (OTC) from the private pharmacy
- Health facility (hospital, private doctor)
- ASB hospital
A patient’s leftover drugs

… brought to the consultation to ask for the same ones
Private drug store near the hospital

- Previous experience with an antibiotic
- OTC medication and street vendors
- Pharmacist’s recommendation
Why do people come to ASB hospital?

- Drugs are free
- Drugs are of good quality
- Foreign people are working there
- Foreign drugs are prescribed
- ASB is close to the place where the people live
Factors influencing doctor’s prescription

• Knowledge and behaviour
• Compliance with the patient
• Reducing AB prescription
Perceived risks and side effects

No risk
• No risk in taking AB
• Follow doctors prescriptions
• AB strengthens your body

Risk
• Lack of knowledge about resistance
• AB weakens your body
Patient perception of MSF and ASB hospital

- Reduction of antibiotic prescriptions creates doubts on the whereabouts of drugs
- Long waiting hours generates frustration
- Doctors’ behaviour is critically viewed
Doctor-patient-relationship

- Universal expectation of an attentive and understanding doctor
- A good doctor prescribes ‘good’ and many (antibiotic) drugs AND displays a ‘good’ behaviour
- Symbolic value of being sick
So why the over prescription?

- Perceived cleaning effect of the antibiotics
- Free availability of AB in the private sector
- Perception of health facility and
The answer to reducing the antibiotic use... is to address is at community level!
To all the people in Afghanistan

Many thanks to
Rafael van den Bergh
Yasmine al-Kourdi
Celine Leto
Jennifer Velloza
Masood Nasim
Gbane Mahama
Catherine Van Overloop
Sahar Bajis
Sokhieng Au
Abdul Sattar

doris.burtscher@vienna.msf.org