Abigail died when she was 1 month old

Abigail was born prematurely at seven months old weighing little more than a bag of flour. She needed help to breathe and a day after birth, nurses found her unresponsive.

Tried 4 different antibiotics but organs started to shut down
Abigail had sepsis, a serious and potentially fatal condition where bacteria get into the blood stream. In response, the body’s immune system goes into overdrive and organs begin to shut down. Abigail was given two antibiotics, penicillin and gentamicin, to treat the infection in her blood, but they did not work. She was then given two different antibiotics, ceftriaxone and metronidazole, but there was still no improvement. Like so many babies in Malawi, Abigail had been given antibiotics that did not work against her infection. She remained desperately ill for four days.

Antibiotics did not work
Lab results taken earlier came back and revealed she was infected with a bacterium called Klebsiella. It was resistant to most of the drugs she had been given; they weren’t working to kill her infection. Abigail was administered amikacin, the last antibiotic available that could possibly work. Then her family faced a waiting game to see if she would survive. Abigail died when she was just a month old.

Children are more vulnerable to infections

- It takes time for babies to fully develop a functioning immune system.
- Children are more exposed to germs.
- Children in poverty are even more vulnerable to infections as they live in crowded or suboptimal housing conditions, lack access to safe drinking water, and have poor access to quality health care.

Effective antibiotics are cornerstones for child care
- sepsis
- meningitis
- pneumonia
- cancer
- tuberculosis
- surgery
- intensive care
- typhoid
- wound infections

40% of deaths in children under 5 across the globe are due to infectious diseases

Infectious diseases are a leading cause of death in children under 5. Children bear the highest burden of infections resistant to antibiotics.
Resistant bacteria affect children in every region of the world

Access to effective antibiotics to treat pneumonia could avert the deaths of **445,000 children**
- There are few antibiotics children can take easily.
- In some areas, antibiotics may be falsified or substandard.

Overuse and misuse of antibiotics
- Overuse and misuse of antibiotics in plants, animals and humans leads to resistance.
- Where children do have access to antibiotics, they are often prescribed and used unnecessarily.
- Managing resistant bacteria will require using antibiotics correctly and only when medically necessary.

We need to address the needs of children in policy discussions on antibiotic resistance and through:

**PREVENTION**
Invest more in infection prevention activities and better access to clean water, sanitation, hygiene and vaccinations.

**EDUCATION**
Include bacterial resistance in education programmes and in awareness campaigns to raise children’s understanding of the microbial world.

**STEWARDSHIP**
Integrate antibiotic stewardship policies and practices into child healthcare programmes.

**RESEARCH**
Invest more and ensure that data collection includes a child focus, and that pediatric formulations of antibiotics are developed.

Icons: Vecteezy, Adobe Stock, Shutterstock

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