



## **Dr Zipporah Ali, Palliative Care Physician and Public Health Specialist**

“The effectiveness of antimicrobials is decreasing due to the rapid rise of drug-resistant pathogens. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) or drug resistance is a global public health issue that must be addressed urgently. The toll this silent pandemic is taking on cancer patients cannot be overlooked. Antimicrobial medicines are crucial in the treatment of cancer. However, the rise in drug-resistant infections is causing treatment delays, extended stays in hospitals and unnecessary deaths due to infection. This must stop!

The rise in AMR is due to several factors, including excessive use and misuse of antimicrobials. One factor is the sale of antimicrobials over the counter (OTC). This is an issue in many countries, where a sale without a prescription, although not legal, happens very often.

Increasing awareness and educating the public on this issue is a vital step. Along with this, addressing the issue of clinicians who tend to overprescribe is also important. We need stronger regulatory mechanisms to address OTC sales of antimicrobials (including antibiotics), and to share best practices and encourage training among the health-care community to ensure appropriate and prudent use of these medicines.”

*Dr Zipporah Ali is a palliative care physician and a public health specialist. She is the current Chair of the NCD Alliance of Kenya and the Vice President of the African Organisation for Research and Training in Cancer (AORTIC) East Africa. She also serves on the board of the Kenya Network of Cancer Organizations (KENCO).*