Gender dimension in livestock’s use of antimicrobial drugs through the views of vet pharmacists – case study of Phu Binh district, Thai Nguyen Province

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• Research question
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Research objective

• To identify gender dimensions of AMR knowledge and practices of male and female veterinary drug sellers/their assistants and their client/farmers.

• To provide practical recommendations for ILRI for efficient interventions of appropriately use of antimicrobial drugs among veterinary drug sellers and farmers
Research questions

1. How male and female animal drug-sellers and their sale assistants differ in providing advice or treatment to their farmer/clients? How are gender relation and decision making between main seller and her/his sale assistant?
2. How male and female clientele access to and buy drugs from animal drug-sellers for treatment or prevention of their farming livestock?
3. How male and female farmers differ in the use of animal drugs for prevention and treatment of their farming livestock?
Study sites, target and sample

- 4 communes of Phu Binh district, Thai Nguyen Province.
- The study was conducted in the 1st week of December, 2018
- Target:
  - Veterinary drug sellers and sale assistants (spouse or relatives, or hired person): 22
  - Commune vets who provide care/treatment and sell drugs to farmers: 03
  - Veterinarian working in the District Veterinary Unit who owns a drug store: 01

Total: 26 interviews (11 male and 15 female)
Photo Bui Van Quang. Examine of sick chicken at a vet pharmacy.
Profile of animal drug sellers: main sellers & sale assistant

**Who are main sellers?**

- Main sellers who got vet qualification (either university level or vocational)
- Vets who provide care/treatment and sell drugs (either own shop or not): private or local government officer (commune vet)
- Main sellers who provide technical advice/treatment and sell drugs
- Vet also owns shop or provide treatment & selling drugs to farmers

“As in my family we raise a lot of livestock so naturally I should have knowledge [about livestock]. I also understand well animal diseases, such as chicken. I know well their common diseases” (male, main seller, no vet qualification)
Profile of animal drug sellers (cont.)

- **Hired sale persons:**
  - Women are preferred: care and patient, gentle; give detailed advices.
  - Have veterinary qualification
  - Most are young, recently graduated

- **Sale assistants: wife or husband/relatives**
  - Have basic training in veterinary work
  - Some wives do not have vet background (housewife, or other qualification)
  - Based on experiences of livestock farming/selling drugs
  - Can give advice for “common/basic” disease and sell “common drugs” and restorative drug (like vitamins)
  - Difficulty emerges: call main seller to ask for instruction/direction
Observation of an wife, sale assistant

• Know name/brand of the drug but does not know about treatment.
• Sale to clients according to client’s provided information of drug name/or brand name.
• Cannot give advices about how to inject and what is appropriate dosage.
• Alter drug according to client’s request if the previous drug cannot cure disease.
• Husband attend training on drug
I mostly only watch the store. If a client comes, if I know [asked drug] I would sell, otherwise I call my husband to ask for information, then he would tell me what to do. Regarding treatment of disease, it’s my husband job, he examines [sick animal] and instruct me name of drug, how to use, how many, etc. Regarding vaccination it is fixed so I can sell, or restorative drugs. For instance, I know what restorative drugs or fattening drugs used for small chicken so I can sell those drugs. My husband instruct me to sell drugs for treatment of disease...

In general I do not face any difficulty [in selling drugs], but I found difficult when I gave clients the right drugs but how come it does not cure the disease..

(wife, 12/12, sale assistant)
Gender differences among drug sellers

Professional qualification is most important for a drug sellers. However:

- Men are more technically experienced /skillful as they travel to farm/households more often for treatment;
- Men seems to inject better than women do;
- Men can travel far distance then women can;
- Women sale drug better as they seem better communicate with clients, more gentle and detailed advices to clients than male sellers are.

“a salewoman is more detailed but a saleman has more practical treatment experiences.” (female commune vet)

“a male [drug]seller talks not as gently as a female [drug] seller, clients seem listen more to a female drug seller. But men have more advantages in term of having more time to travel to farm for support, or grasp market information better, more practical” (male, main seller/vet qual.)
Profile of clients/clientele

- Men and women farmers:
  - Large scale and small scale farmers (chicken or pigs)
  - Long years of livestock farming and beginners
  - Mobile phone as active means for giving advice and communication: Q-A; descriptions of symptoms; even photo of sick animal; instruction of use; reminding of vaccination schedule; order breed, drugs, etc.
Gender differences in livestock farming

• Scale of farming (chicken/pigs)
  – Large scale farming: mostly lead by men/ or by the couple
    • Women work in factories (textile)
    • Farms are often located far from home so men tend to travel to farm as women stay at home for housework
  – Small scale farming: mostly lead by women

• Gender division of labor in livestock farming:
  – Men – heavy work: transportation, buying breed; food; hard work; treatment
  – Women: feeding and cleaning
  – Men seem to dominate in decision making as traditional gender norms exist.
Gender differences (cont.) - quotes

Here women do majority of work. But husband make last decision, and wife involve in the discussion process. *(wife, sale assistant)*

Men take main role in chicken farming here. Men go to buy drug more. Men also care for prevention. Because as professional farming [large scale] in livestock men are the main decision maker because men can have broader view.. Of course there are also family where women are decision makers. .. For long year of farming men and women can have equal knowledge but men still make decision *(male, main drug seller)*

In practice, husband understand better about drug use, and wife mainly do the caring tasks *(wife, sale assistant)*

In large scale livestock farming, husband take main responsibility and for small scale farming, the wife will do the job and husband would go to do other works. Men inject more because they have strong hand.*(female, commune vet)*
Gender differences in client’s disease prevention and treatment

- It seems that the main care taker of livestock farming will be the one who go to buy drugs.
- Men are more responsible for treatment of sick animals:
  - Men take main task of injecting (often big animals like pig, cattle). Women can do injecting work (mainly chicken) but they often help to keep animal for husband’s doing injection.
  - For drinking medicine: both husband and wife can do
  - Men tend to be in charge of technical problem;
- Small scale farmers less concern of vaccination than the larger one “Husband concern about prevention then wife does” (female, commune vet,)
- **Male clients**: seem more conservative and more confident in their knowledge than female ones.
- **Female clients**: seem to follow drug-seller advices.
Issues emerging from observations and interviews with drug sellers

1. **Self-treatment:**
   - Often of “known symptom/diseases”: ask for already effective used drug
   - Buy drug and to inject / dissolving drug themselves
     - Brought drug box cover / or tell drug name/brand name

“Clients who buy drug for injecting by themselves often are men because they have more experiences” (male, commune vet).

“Most of clients buy drug home to do treatment by themselves, except those who do not have experiences, they ask me to go to their house to do treatment” (wife, sale assistant)
2. **Overuse/ Increased dosage:**
- Seem common practice for both drug-sellers/vets and clients
- Experience based: follow instruction will not effectively cure animal therefore need to increase dose (10-30%)

3. **Combination of drug use for effective treatment;**

4. Some farmers use human drug for animal treatment; or use antibiotics for prevention.

“clients also read [drug use] instruction, but if they follow the instruction, disease would not get away, because instruction is for ideal farming conditions, in practice, dosage should be increased in order to effectively cure the disease, increase [dose]about 30% it would be more effective.” (male, main seller, vet qual.)

“..we never [give advice to] do injection according to instructed dose [written in drug cover], often, to increase the dose because of drug resistance and anyway to supplement for scattered away drug during treatment. For instance, 1cc/10kg, we would use 1cc/8kg instead. It’s from our experiences, no one teach us, and I found it effective way” (female, hired salewoman)
Issues

4. Drug resistance:

“people care about effective cure not about [drug] resistance”
(nhờn thuốc)

Reasons:

- farmers want to quickly cure animals->overdose
- listen/watch neighbors, sometime more than listen/follow the drug seller.
- longtime use of a certain drug
- combination treatment
- Self-treatment: buy antibiotics for prevention of disease
Observation between sale assistant & client

Client: Please give me drug for pig fever relief!
Drug seller: Do you take it for big pig or small pig?
Client: Big one.
Drug seller: What do you prefer: cheap or expensive drug?
Client: Not so expensive.
Drug seller: There are a type of drug that is fever relief and also add gluco and restorative (thuốc bổ)
Client: How much for that?
Drug seller: 90 thousand VND
Client: it is so expensive.
Drug seller: Because it contain also restorative and can be injectable for various weight (một thể trọng)
Observation between sale assistant & client

7 clients: 2 men and 5 women access drug store.  
2 men tell to salesperson the name/brand of drug, paid and went out.  
1 man listened to the seller’s advice for other brand/drug but insisted to buy the one he wanted to buy.  
Women asked for more information from the seller.  
1 woman changed to buy another brand name drug after getting advice from the seller.
Training on drug resistance

• Farmers, both men and women, seem not well aware about issues of drug resistance; side-effect or contradiction of drug use although pay attention on expired date of drug.
• Limited training on drug resistance
• Both drug sellers/sale assistant are keen to get training on drug resistance.
• More men attend training than women do (more male vet/drug sellers than women one?)
Recommendations

1. Gender-awareness trainings for vets and assistant drag sellers is a first step for them to provide appropriate services to male and female farmers (vets and drag sellers need to be aware of gendered decision-making, gendered behaviors and gendered knowledge levels of their clients).

2. A special training for assistant drag sellers is required because there is a knowledge gap between (male) vets and (female) sellers. Given that the majority of assistant drag sellers are female, we need to provide women friendly trainings (having female trainers, use easy languages, organize it in time and location convenient for women).

3. A special training for (male) vets is required to give advice about how to train their assistants (who are often women) by providing standardized training manual for guiding (female) drag sellers.

4. Further research on differences between male and female farmers is needed to understand gender differences in knowledge, practices and decision-making. If women farmers are in charge of most of chicken and pig raising, women also need to have proper knowledge on prevention and treatment of diseases.
Thank you for your attention!