

## Online Appendix. Interview Discussion Guide

### I. Paperwork (2 minutes)

Before starting, the moderator will verbally summarize the consent and ask participants to read and sign the consent forms.

### II. Introduction (5 minutes)

Interviewer welcomes the person, introduce herself and reviews the following points:

- Assures participants of confidentiality.
- Asks for oral agreement to respect one another's confidentiality.
- Explains that session will be recorded and reviewed by a small group of researchers.
- Affirms that participants will not be identified personally in transcripts or other reports.
- Affirms that only first names or nicknames will be recorded in transcripts or other reports.
- Affirms that participants may choose not to answer a question.
- Assures participants that there are no right or wrong answers.
- Affirms that disagreement is okay: we want to hear all thoughts/opinions.
- Affirms that researchers are interested in honest answers to the questions.
- Lets participants know that the discussion will take no more than an hour and a half and we will give out our thank you gift cards at the end of the talk.

Interviewer starts recording and thanks participants for being there. Interviewer asks participants to state either a first name or a nickname that they would like to use as an identifier, and to say anything about themselves that they would like to share.

### III. Questionnaire (15 minutes)

"Thank you for agreeing to take part. We want to talk with you about the use of antibiotics. As you probably know, antibiotics are drugs that are used to treat infections, such as urinary infections, bronchitis, and other problems caused by bacteria in the body.

"Antibiotics are to be used under a physician prescription. That is, it requires that you recognize that you might have an infection, make an appointment and see a physician, have a thorough diagnosis, have them write a prescription, go to the pharmacy, and the prescription is filled. This can create problems for some people, particularly people who are very busy, who don't have access to doctors, or who don't have the money for an appointment.

"However, there are ways that some people get access to antibiotics without a doctor's prescription. This includes situations such as when people have leftover antibiotics duly prescribed by a physician some time ago, purchase antibiotics directly from some place or buy them from an online pharmacy. While most people know that they should see a doctor to obtain a prescription, there are times when people decide to get and take the antibiotics without talking with a doctor.

"So we would like to talk with you about why people might use antibiotics without seeing a doctor first, and what could be possible solutions from your point of view. Regardless of whether or not you or a family member have ever done this, we are still interested in your views on the use of antibiotics, so thank you for agreeing to take part. There are no right or wrong answers."

### IV. Discussion

- a. "To start, we would like to know whether you or someone you know has taken antibiotics without a doctor's prescription. We would like to know what the situation was."
  - If 'yes', then prompt to describe:
    - What were the symptoms?
    - Which antibiotic did you take?
    - Who suggested it?

- Where did you get the antibiotics?
  - Did the antibiotics work?
  - If 'no', then move to b.
- b. “Thanks for that. Now I would like to go deeper into the reasons that motivate people to take antibiotics without medical prescription. Let’s suppose that you have the following symptoms:
- ✓ Persistent cough, with discharge
  - ✓ General malaise
  - ✓ Some difficulty breathing during the night

Would you go to see a doctor? When would you feel it was okay to go to a pharmacy? Can you please tell us, what could be the main reason to do that?

- Possible prompts:
  - Resources: time, money, information.
  - Ideas: no need for medical appointment, same antibiotic already taken, lack of confidence in health system, fear of knowing it was serious.
  - Health system: medical appointment assigned to a very far date, health service very congested.
  - Society: no medical insurance, no permission from work place, availability of service in pharmacies.
  - What about the following symptoms: pain or burning during urination, more frequent urination, lower abdominal pain.
- c. “Thanks...now, some doctors worry about the use antibiotics, and say that when you use too many antibiotics you can have infections that are more difficult to clear up. Have you ever heard this? Is this something that you worry about? So, why do they say that?”
- Possible prompts:
  - Are antibiotics always effective?
  - Are antibiotics always safe?
  - What about the risk of antibiotic resistance?
  - How do you know about this? Where did you hear it?
- d. “Thanks for that. Now we would like to know which could be good options to avoid this practice. What do you think that has to be done?”
- Possible prompts:
  - What about restrictions on antibiotic sales by the government?
  - What about charging some taxes on antibiotics to increase the price?
  - Training of pharmacies’ staff to provide a more complete service?
  - To speed the attention at medical centers with the participation of other health professionals?
  - Educational campaigns? Where? How?
  - Call center or websites to assess initial symptoms?

**V. Wrap-up (final 3 minutes)**

“Is there anything else that we should know about your experiences...either positive or negative...? Any last thoughts or comments about the session?”

Interviewer thanks the participant, hands out gift card.