

Life-saving drug not used – cause it's too cheap

A Life-saving drug used to treat seriously-ill pregnant women in Africa is not widely available – in part because it's too cheap.

Magnesium sulphate is a low-cost but effective treatment for eclampsia and pre-eclampsia in 5 pregnant women. The disease, although relatively rare, claims the lives of more than 63,000 women a year, mostly in poorer countries and can kill unborn children. But researchers at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), working with colleagues in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Norway, found that availability of the drug is patchy in both Zimbabwe and Mozambique. They said that part of the problem was that because the 10 drug is cheap, pharmaceutical companies do not press for its registration with health authorities or market it widely as the profits to be made from it are small.

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Vocabulary: pregnant = 'schwanger'; eclampsia = 'Krampfanfall während der Schwangerschaft, Eklampsie'; researcher = 'person who studies something to discover new facts'; available = 'that can be used / obtained'.

Questions:

1. What do *pregnant*, *disease* and *patchy* mean?
2. Why is the drug (magnesium sulphate) not widely available in Africa?
3. Why can most people in Africa not afford a drug against AIDS?