

Public Health Issues in Bangladesh: Concern for Everyone

Tarafdar MA

Bangladesh faces major public health challenges. Communicable diseases, childhood malnutrition, Unsafe food by chemical substances and toxins contamination remain major threat to public health in Bangladesh. Bangladesh remains among the countries with highest TB burden in the world. Pneumonia and infectious diseases are still concern for young children. Drug abuse becoming serious threat to public health in Bangladesh day by day, non-communicable diseases like cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and chronic respiratory diseases have an upward trend for the couple of decades in Bangladesh.

Changing lifestyles, persistent social inequality, unstable social life and economic insecurity are posing new health challenges of non-communicable diseases, substance abuse, and mental health problems.¹

Challenges to meet the health needs remain high in low- and middle-income countries like Bangladesh despite global, regional and national efforts to improve the health of the general population, in particular of those living in rural and hard to reach areas. To improve recruitment, deployment and attraction of skilled health workers to the remote and rural health facilities it is of utmost important recognizing the importance of developing evidence-based policies.²

Bangladesh has low ratios of credentialed professionals- only 0.5 doctors and 0.2 nurses per 1000 people, far less than the minimum standard of 2.28 per 1000 recommended by WHO.³

Deaths due to diseases and morbidity could disrupt normal functioning of day-to-day life and the livelihood of people as they affect institutions, in particular health-care systems and the people. They also impose a resource burden on governments and society and constrain economic development and social welfare. This section reviews the impact of diseases on human life and health-care systems in an attempt to identify key issues related to the provision of basic health services.⁴

To improve the population's health status, an effectively performing health system is essential, which provides safeguard against health-related financial threat and enhance the health sector's responsiveness to population needs. A health system consists of all organizations, people and actions, whose primary intent is to promote, restore or maintain health. Here in Bangladesh, healthcare is rendered through government-run hospitals and privately-run clinics. Bangladesh is still struggling in delivering quality health care services for its population in general.⁵

Bangladesh shows exceptional health achievements

Correspondence to:

Prof. Dr. Monowar Ahmad Tarafdar
Professor and Head, Department of Community Medicine
Z H sikder Women's Medical College, Dhaka
Email: babla762@yahoo.com

compared to the neighbouring Asian countries. Although Bangladesh's national GDP puts it in the lowest income group in SEARO countries, the health achievement is higher and Bangladesh's life expectancy is superior to that for the other countries of the region.⁶

The relationship of the human rights and health situation is recognized by the constitution and major policy documents of the Bangladesh in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has ratified most of the international treaties and covenants including International Convent on Civil and Political Right (ICCPR), International Convent on Economic, Social and Cultural Right (ICESCR); and a signatory of international declarations including Alma-Ata, International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Beijing declarations, and Millennium Development Goals; and thus, it is mandatory for the Government to ensure public health both legally and ethically.⁷

Bangladesh has a lot of achievements in health sector but has to go a long way to achieve a lot in future. A national human resources policy and action plan, a national health insurance system and an interoperable electronic health information system are among the necessities in future.

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