

AdSEARCH BITES

Monthly Newsletter

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Canadian Deputy Minister for International Development Congratulates AdSEARCH by icddr,b

26 May 2024



Dr Christopher MacLennan, Deputy Minister for International Development of Canada, in his two-day visit to Bangladesh, attended the demonstration of AdSEARCH's ongoing interventions at icddr,b. Dr MacLennan was accompanied by **H.E. Ms. Lilly Nicholls**, High Commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh, **Joe Goodings**, Head of International Development Assistance, and **Ms. Farzana Sultana**, Development Advisor, Global Affairs Canada (GAC).



Photo (left to right): Dr Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman and Dr Sharful Islam Khan presenting to the visitors.

As a part of his visit to strengthen Canada's partnerships with selective world-class non-government and research organisations of Bangladesh, **Dr MacLennan** learned about icddr,b's lifesaving innovations and activities, especially with the Key Populations (KPs) and the Essential Gynaecological Skills (EGS) programme during his visit at icddr,b. It was a unique opportunity for the project beneficiaries and the visitors to exchange dialogues and showcase the SRHR service provisions. With an overview of the organisation **Dr Tahmeed Ahmed**, Executive Director of icddr,b, led the visitors towards the AdSEARCH demonstration zone. The demonstration began with an opening from the Technical Coordinator of AdSEARCH **Dr Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman** as he explained the core objective of AdSEARCH and the project's journey in understanding the SRHR burden and distinct needs and exploring the SRHR service gaps through multiple facility-based studies. In the presence of the visitors along with the AdSEARCH Project Director **Dr Shams El Arifeen** and AdSEARCH Deputy Project Director **Dr Quamrun Nahar**, Dr Rahman emphasised the project's innovative approaches investing to enhance

health outcomes for the vulnerable groups through targeted SRHR services. In the subsequent session, **Dr Sharful Islam Khan**, Theme Lead of the studies and activities involving the Key Populations (KPs) under AdSEARCH, demonstrated the Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) burden and needs of this distinct population, the existing service gaps, the development and testing of SRH innovations and the ongoing service provisions at both Dhaka and Jashore. Dr Khan invited the visitors to meet the service beneficiaries for a face-to-face meet and learn more about the experiences. Dr Rahman, forwarded the demonstration as he gradually unfolded the SRHR innovations initiated under the AdSEARCH Innovation and Evidence Hub in alignment with TAP (Technology, Approach and Product). As the Principal Investigator of the Study, Dr Rahman took the opportunity to demonstrate the EGS programme, emphasising its critical role in improving women's health. In light of this, Dr MacLennan along with his team met the Civil Surgeon of Dinajpur, who highlighted how the EGS implementation package has been

integrated into the national programme to improve the gynaecological healthcare for women and girls in Bangladesh. In his closing remark, Dr MacLennan appreciated the team's effort bringing in the field to the icddr,b's premises and expressed his gratitude towards icddr,b.

“An absolutely inspiring example of skill, compassion, competence, and innovation in the service of Bangladesh and the world. Bravo!”



Dr Christopher MacLennan
Deputy Minister for International Development of Canada.

AdSEARCH by icddr,b is making a difference!

Beneficiaries from Key Population and Essential Gynaecological Skills programme share their experiences

26 May 2024



Photo: The workshop participants with the AdSEARCH PMT members at icddr,b



Photo: Hospital visit by the Dinajpur Civil Surgeon and the EGS team

Words of appreciation from the beneficiaries are a major driver of any service provider and the initiators. On 26 May 2024, in a stakeholder workshop on AdSEARCH's ongoing initiatives for Key Populations (KPs) and Essential Gynaecological Healthcare (EGS) programme, representatives from stakeholders, the Project Management Team (PMT), the study teams and direct service beneficiaries exchanged their feelings and experiences.

At the workshop, AdSEARCH PMT members handed over an Acknowledgement Certificate to **Dr AHM Borhan-Ul-Islam Siddiki**, Civil Surgeon of Dinajpur district, and acknowledged the gynaecologists and nurses, for their outstanding support and contribution for successfully

implementing the EGS programme in the Dinajpur district. The EGS programme, the first of its kind in Bangladesh, was implemented from May 2022 to June 2024. The dedication and collaboration of the Civil Surgeon Office of Dinajpur were instrumental in the package's success.

In addition, AdSEARCH also acknowledged the contributions of the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the KPs studies.

Nurun Nahar, an activist and representative of the KPs community from Jashore, called for improved health services for vulnerable female sex workers and their children. On behalf of the KP community, Nahar emphasised the need for better healthcare provisions. "Our community faces

"Before the EGS programme, non-specialised doctors didn't receive any comprehensive training in gynaecology. With AdSEARCH's initiative, the newly graduated and non-specialised healthcare providers have received comprehensive training to manage gynaecological patients and we have also a separate space for providing the service, ensuring privacy. We strongly urge the Government of Bangladesh to recognise the benefits and implement such a programme in all districts as it is crucial for the advancement of women's healthcare in the country."

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Dr AHM Borhan-Ul-Islam Siddiki
Civil Surgeon of Dinajpur district.

numerous challenges, and we must have access to adequate health services for ourselves and our children”, she stated. AdSEARCH has been conducting multiple studies on KPs and providing SRHR services in the Dhaka and Jashore districts. Under the leadership of

Dr Sharful Islam Khan, one of the AdSEARCH Theme Leads, the respective study team has established the first global SRHR surveillance system for KPs. The workshop was moderated by **Dr Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman**, Technical Coordinator of AdSEARCH. Remarks

were delivered by **Dr Shams El Arifeen**, Project Director; **Dr Quamrun Nahar**, Deputy Project Director; and Dr Sharful Islam Khan, Theme Lead at AdSEARCH.

Innovation testing on Pocket Colposcope for screening of Cervical cancer

13 May 2024



Photo: (Left to right): Dr Md. Azizul Alim sharing his remarks; Dr Fatema Khatun in between a Q&A session

Cervical cancer remains a significant health concern, especially in low-resource settings. AdSEARCH by icddr,b has initiated four vibrant innovations for strengthening health systems, including the Pocket Colposcope for Cervical cancer screening. With the introduction of the pocket colposcope and the planned implementation research, more women are expected to gain access to early detection and timely interventions.

On 13 May 2024, a ‘Workshop on Pocket Colposcope for Screening of Cervical Cancer: Implementation Research’ was held at the EPI Bhaban, DGHS, Mohakhali, where **Dr Md. Azizul Alim**, Programme Manager for Maternal Health, MNC&AH, DGHS welcomed everyone to the workshop.

Dr Fatema Khatun, Principal Investigator of the study and Associate Scientist, icddr,b presented the study updates, followed by a Q&A session with **Dr Humaira Alam**, Consultant, icddr,b and the study team. **Dr Mustufa Mahmud**, **Dr Md. Shafiul Azam**, DPM-CSBA & Midwifery, Maternal Health, MNC&AH, **Dr Salina Akhter**, DPM-EOC, Maternal Health, MNC&AH, DGHS and other representatives from MNC&AH participated in the discussion. In her presentation, Dr Fatema provided an update on the screening coverage and the status of the key informant interviews that have been conducted with the GoB officials, nurses, and doctors under the ongoing study. She further explained the classification process of the pocket colposcopy images by the

study nurses. Dr Alim, in his remarks, stated that the innovation study has the potential to understand the current scenario of the cervical cancer screening programme and if required, assist in redesigning.

The innovation testing on Pocket Colposcopy for screening Cervical cancer has been initiated from AdSEARCH by icddr,b in the Mymensingh and Kishoreganj districts. The study is designed as an implementation research of alternative technologies for screening, triage, and management of cervical cancer in primary and secondary care settings in Bangladesh. It involves screening women using the pocket colposcope along with VIA in primary care settings.

Announcement

Dr Quamrun Nahar contributing to the ICPD30

15 May 2024



Photo: Dr Quamrun Nahar speaking on changing landscape in SRHR at ICPD30 at Sheraton, Dhaka

Dr Quamrun Nahar, Deputy Project Director, AdSEARCH by icddr,b and Head of Research, MCHD participated as one of the esteemed panelists at the ICPD30 Global Dialogue on Demographic Diversity and Sustainable Development on 15 May 2024. Moderated by **Julia Bunting** from the UNFPA, Dr Nahar joined the dialogue with Honorable

Aymen Seifennaser, member of the Libyan House of Representatives; **Dr Onikepe Owolabi** from the Guttmacher Institute; **Professor Laura Ferguson** from the University of Southern California; and **Dr Howard Friedman** from UNFPA. Dr Quamrun Nahar discussed how demographic shifts, urbanisation,

climate change, and technological advancements will shape the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in the next 30 years.

2024 marks the 30th anniversary of the landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The ICPD was a critical paradigm shift in the field of population and development, where 179 governments adopted the ICPD Programme of Action (PoA). It emphasised the qualitative aspects of the population and people's rights for the first time, recognising that the goal of development is to improve the quality of life of all people, and the prerequisites for sustainable development are ensuring equal rights of women and girls, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and ensuring human rights and dignity of individuals.

The EGS programme team participated in Safe Motherhood Day 2024



The Essential Gynaecological Skills (EGS) programme team participated and showcased a stall at the Safe Motherhood Day 2024 on 28 May at Swasthya Bhaban Auditorium of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in Mohakhali, Dhaka. The Maternal Health Programme of the DGHS featured a display booth at the event, showcasing the EGS programme. The Maternal Health Programme



leads this project in collaboration with icddr,b and OGSB, with funding from Global Affairs Canada (GAC) through AdSEARCH by icddr,b and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG). The booth displayed the data recording system for outpatient gynaecological patients, which included a structured register, referral form, monthly

reporting form, training modules, and job aids. Dr Abul Bashar Mohammed Khurshid Alam, the Director General of DGHS visited the stall and learned about the EGS programme along with the other guests.



'Dhaka Mail' covers EGS programme

Read the full article as Dhaka Mail, the national online daily covers the innovation testing of the Essential Gynaecological Skills (EGS) programme on 18 May 2024.

Read more: <https://dhakamail.com/women-and-children/165850>



'Prothom Alo' covers Mental Well-being Corner

Read the full article in the Daily Prothom Alo, the leading Bengali national daily, covering the intervention of the Mental Well-being Corner study at the front page on 10 May 2024.

Read more: <https://www.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/d9wwvoov7lo>

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<http://adsearch.icddr.org/Study/AllPublications>



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