

Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (AdSEARCH) by icddr,b

AdSEARCH BITES

Monthly Newsletter

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It's Time to Prioritise Mental Health in the Workplace: icddr,b Celebrated the World Mental Health Day 2024

21 October 2024

In celebration of World Mental Health Day 2024, the icddr,b Human Resources department with support from

AdSEARCH organised a seminar and a Mental Wellness Fair, and a day-long psychological counselling session for

the icddr,b employees. The initiative brought together a large number of staff members to the event.



From left to right: The celebration began with a session on stress management with Jobeda Khatun at the icddr,b Sasakawa Auditorium. At the Mental Wellness Fair, the occupational Health and Safety booth informed staff about the icddr,b's initiative to introduce the Mental Health First Aiders, Mental Health Champion and Physical Health First Aiders for a friendlier workspace.



From left to right: The Physical Well-being booth encouraged everyone to stay active for both mental and physical benefits, while the Hydration and Nutrition booth showed how our daily diet affects our mood energy levels, and mental wellbeing.

Dr Tahmeed Ahmed welcomed everyone to the event by addressing the increasing demands of stress management and mental well-being in the workplace. His talk was followed by a participatory session on stress management, led by **Jobeda Khatun** where she offered practical strategies for

managing stress at the workplace that many icddr,b colleagues found immediately useful. The session continued as **Dr Md. Musharrof Hossain** presented the icddr,b's mental health support system, detailing the services available to its employees. The session was followed by closing remarks

from **Dr Shams El Arifeen**. One key attraction of the celebration was the Mental Wellness Fair at the icddr,b Mohakhali campus which allowed attendees to engage in diverse well-being activities through five individual booths.



The in-person Psychological Counselling booth opened for registration for those interested in meeting a psychologist and experiencing an in-person counselling. Around 60 icddr,b colleagues registered for the service from four psychologists, who currently are providing tele-counselling support through the AdSEARCH Mental Wellness Centre study, at six selected health facilities across Bangladesh.



A unique feature of the fair was "Dear Me!" — a booth where participants were encouraged to write letters to their present, past, and future selves, filling it with their hopes, dreams, and thoughts. At the bottom right, Dr Quamrun Nahar with selective AdSEARCH study leads and the AdSEARCH communication team.

Major Attendees (chronology as appeared in the news):

Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, Executive Director, icddr,b

Jobeda Khatun, Assistant Professor and former Chairperson of the Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Dhaka

Dr Md Musharrof Hossain, Acting Director of HR and Head of Human Resources Management, icddr,b

Dr Shams El Arifeen, Project Director, AdSEARCH & Senior Director and Senior Scientist, MCHD, icddr,b

Dr Quamrun Nahar, Deputy Project Director, AdSEARCH & Head of Research, MCHD, icddr,b

TENtrol Study Organised a Sensitisation Workshop at OGSB

3 October 2024



Bottom left to right: Dr Raza presenting the TENS machine; Dr Arifeen during his closing remark; Participants from the workshop engaging with the study team at the demonstration session.

AdSEARCH has organised a sensitisation workshop on the TENtrol study at Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB) Hospital and Institute of Reproductive and Child Health (IRCH), Mirpur, Dhaka, with a focus on the features and feasibility of using the TENS machine for managing labour pain in the Bangladeshi context. **Prof. Dr Farhana Dewan** inaugurated the event with an emphasise on the importance of improved pain management options for women in labour. Followed by

Prof. Dr Salma Rouf, who highlighted the unique challenges of labour pain management in the country context, and underscored the potential impact of the TENS machine.

Dr Sahar Raza, Principal Investigator took the discussion further with an overview of the TENtrol study, explaining how the TENS machine could enhance women's birthing experience by improving pain management.

Dr Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman facilitated a discussion and gathered valuable feedback and insights from the

participants. During the discussion, OGSB executive committee members reiterated the importance of the study, marking it as an important step forward in improving maternal healthcare. The event concluded with closing remarks from **Dr Shams El Arifeen**. Workshop participants also had the opportunity to engage in a demonstration session of the TENS machine at the booth, where the respective study team were available to answer questions and demonstrate the device's functionality.

Major Attendees (chronology as appeared in the news):

Prof Dr Farhana Dewan, *President, OGSB*

Prof Dr Salma Rouf, *Secretary General, OGSB*

Dr Sahar Raza, *Principal Investigator, TENtrol study & Research Investigator, MCHD, icddr,b*

Dr Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman, *Technical Coordinator, AdSEARCH & Scientist, MCHD, icddr,b*

Dr Shams El Arifeen, *Project Director, AdSEARCH & Senior Director and Senior Scientist, MCHD, icddr,b*

Workshop on Hospital-based Register for Fistula Management Held

20 October 2024



A workshop on the “Design and Development of a Hospital-Based Register for Fistula Management” took place at the icddr,b HIV conference room. Experts discussed the challenges of fistula management and the need for a national register to track cases effectively at the workshop.

Dr Sayeba Akhter inaugurated the workshop, highlighting the difficulties of identifying fistula patients across the country. She emphasised the urgent need for a national fistula register to improve patient identification and care. After presenting the current practices in fistula reporting and identifying the absence of a standardised system for documenting fistula-related variables in

the DHIS2 platform, **Dr Shafiqul Ameen**, introduced a methodology to develop a hospital-based register aimed at streamlining fistula management and reporting.

Dr Azizul Alim pointed out the significance of accurate documentation, aligning with the national goal of eradicating fistula by 2030. “Accurate records of cases and treatments are essential for reaching this goal” he noted, emphasising the dual importance of case sheets and registers for effective documentation. Discussions also covered plans to digitalise the register, integrating it with digital health services in the future. Participants further recommended adding more

fistula-specific variables to existing gynaecological records to enhance data accuracy and comprehensiveness. Representatives from DGHS, OGSB, UNICEF, Dhaka Medical College, Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College, Kumudini Women's Medical College, Delta Medical College Hospital, Popular Medical College, LAMB Hospital, MAMM'S Institute of Fistula and Women's Health were present at the workshop. The workshop concluded with gratitude expressed by Dr Sayeba Akhter and Dr Azizul Alim for the participants' active involvement and insightful contributions.

Major Attendees (chronology as appeared in the news):

Dr Sayeba Akhter, Professor and CEO, MAMM'S Institute of Fistula and Women's Health

Dr Md. Azizul Alim, Programme Manager, Maternal Health, MNC&AH, DGHS

Dr Shafiqul Ameen, Assistant Scientist, MCHD, icddr,b

Head of Development Cooperation, GAC visited icddr,b

22 October 2024



Bottom left to right: A presentation and discussion session took place at the ED's conference room; The visitors at the Mucosal Immunology and Vaccinology Laboratory Tour.

Stephen Weaver, Head of Development Cooperation at Global Affairs Canada (GAC), visited icddr,b Dhaka campus and learned about the progress on the AdSEARCH project activity. **Dr Shams El Arifeen** presented an update on the AdSEARCH Project and

highlighted the key achievements and ongoing research initiatives supported by GAC. Distinguished guests Stephen Weaver and **Farzana Sultana** were warmly received by **Dr Tahmeed Ahmed**, along with other members of the Senior

Leadership Team (SLT) of icddr,b. Dr Tahmeed presented an overview of icddr,b works. It's his 1st visit as the head of Development cooperation after joining Bangladesh mission.

Major Attendees (chronology as appeared in the news):

Stephen Weaver, Head of Development Cooperation, GAC

Dr Shams El Arifeen, Project Director, AdSEARCH & Senior Director and Senior Scientist, MCHD, icddr,b

Farzana Sultana, Development Advisor, GAC

Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, Executive Director, icddr,b

GAC Visited AdSEARCH Study Sites at Baliakandi and Rajbari

29, 30 & 31 October 2024

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) representatives recently made a three-day visit to AdSEARCH study sites, including the Baliakandi Upazilla Health Complex to oversee the progress of different studies. On the first day, the visiting team spent time at Balika Bodhu field site and observed a session of study participants and had a discussion with them. The second day, visitors met

Dr Md. Faruk Hosain, Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer (UHFPO) and his team at the Baliakandi UHC to oversee the progress of these AdSEARCH studies. The GAC delegates participated in a workshop dedicated to understand the study initiatives taken at the Baliakandi Health Complex. The itinerary included a visit at the Baliakandi UHC facilities, the Adolescent

Friendly Health Corner, the ANC room, the labor room, and the pathology department, as well as the CHAMPS initiative's delivery room. The team also made household visits to speak to the study participants of the AdSEARCH pregnancy and adolescent cohort studies and observe field activities at the last day of the visit.



A visit to the Balika Bodhu field site on 29 October.



On 30 October, GAC delegates participated in a workshop dedicated to understanding the study initiatives taken at the Baliakandi Health Complex.



The team visited Baliakandi UHC facilities, the Adolescent Friendly Health Corner, the ANC room, the labor room, and the pathology department, as well as the CHAMPS initiative's delivery room.

Major Attendees:

Farzana Sultana, Development Advisor, GAC

Dr Momena Khatun, Health Technical Specialist, Field Support Services Project of GAC

Dr Md. Faruk Hosain, UH&FPO, Baliakandi Upazila Health Complex

Dr Quamrun Nahar, Deputy Project Director, AdSEARCH & Head of Research, MCHD, icddr,b

Anisuddin Ahmed, Project Coordinator, AdSEARCH and MCHD, icddr,b

Youth's Interaction with CSO Forum at BNYCFP 2024

29 October 2024

The Civil Society Organization (CSO) Forum hosted an interactive plenary session titled “Youths’ Interaction with CSO Forum in the Context of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for an Adolescent-Friendly Health System” in the Bangladesh National Youth Conference on Family Planning (BNYCFP) 2024, organised by SERAC Bangladesh.

The session aimed to amplify youths’ voices, fostering dialogue on creating

an adolescent-friendly health system and outlining future advocacy steps. The session featured 12 youth speakers and seven expert speakers from the CSO Forum, who shared their insights on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) through a rights-based approach.

Fariya Rahman, Principal Investigator of AdAARCH HopeBox study attended as a youth speaker and shared her insights on SRHR through a

rights-based approach.

Moinuddin Haider, Associate Scientist of icddr,b attended as a panellist in the session.

Moderated by Ipas Bangladesh, the convenor of CSO Forum, the session allowed youth to pose critical questions from their experience and expectations, with experts responding to generating solutions for an adolescent-friendly health system.



Announcement



AdSEARCH study team recently attended the Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum (SVRI) 2024 in Cape Town, South Africa, the largest global, abstract-driven research and advocacy conference on violence against women and violence against children conference organised by the SVRI and the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC).

Nahida Akter, Gender Equality Specialist at MCHD presented an oral paper titled “Roadblocks to ending the two-finger test of survivors of rape during medico-legal evidence collection in rape cases: Learnings from Bangladesh,” which discussed challenges in eradicating this harmful practice in Bangladesh.

Mahfuz Al Mamun, Assistant Scientist at icddr,b presented a poster on the “Validation of ECS-20 for measuring economic coercion against female garment workers (FGW),” a study funded by AdSEARCH that validated a 5-item scale focusing on husbands’ control over wives’ economic resources. This year, approximately 1,500 researchers, practitioners, policymakers, donors, survivors and others from more than 130 countries in the world attended the Forum.

Dr Sahar Raza, Research Investigator of MCHD recently presented her study poster at the 8th Annual BSACP (British Society of Abortion Care Providers) Conference, held at the Conway Hall Ethical Society in London. Her study, “Assessing Health Systems’ Capacity to Provide Post-Abortion Care: Insights from Seven Low- and Middle-Income Countries,” funded by AdSEARCH, was selected for presentation.

This research was based on a secondary analysis of data from seven countries to highlight the significant gaps in the provision of post-abortion care (PAC) at health facilities. The findings also provide recommendations aimed at strengthening PAC services in low- and middle-income countries.

AdSEARCH Bites **Previous Issues:**



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



Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (AdSEARCH) by icddr,b

68, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Mohakhali, Dhaka 1212

Email: adsearch_official@icddr.org | **Website:** adsearch.icddr.org

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