



NEWS LETTER

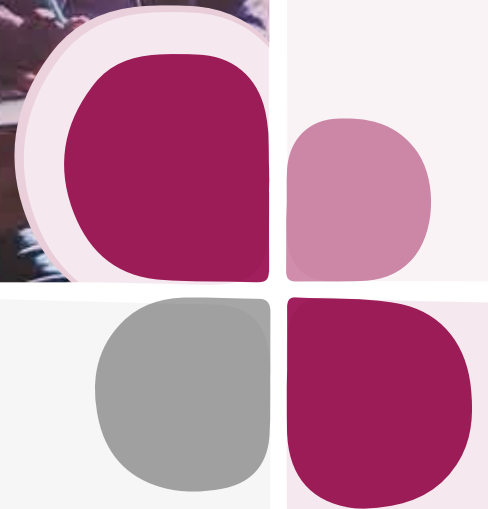


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ARK Foundation Partners with **Mannion Daniels, UK** to Co-Lead **Health Systems Global Secretariat**

We are excited to announce that ARK Foundation, Bangladesh, in collaboration with Mannion Daniels, UK, is now co-managing the Health Systems Global (HSG) Secretariat. This partnership marks a major milestone for the ARK Foundation, solidifying our role as a key player in the global health landscape.

Health Systems Global is the premier membership organization dedicated to advancing health systems research and translating knowledge into practice. HSG's mission focuses on driving research and promoting knowledge in health policy and systems. We are proud to have two of our distinguished members contributing to this effort: Prof. Rumana Huque, who serves as the [Research Advisor](#) for the HSG Secretariat, and Md. Farid Ahamed, who leads as the [Program Coordinator](#). Their expertise and leadership are crucial in furthering HSG's mission.

In her role as Research Advisor, Prof. Rumana Huque's role is to strategically guide HSG's global Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), facilitating their activities align with impactful research and policy objectives. Drawing on her expertise in health economics and systems research, Prof. Huque hopes to apply her experience to provide evidence-based recommendations that could influence global health policy.

Being part of the HSG community connects the ARK Foundation with a global network of experts, researchers, and policymakers. This partnership not only gives us access to the latest research and discussions on health systems governance but also provides a platform for sharing our findings, policy recommendations, and innovations with a wider audience.

We look forward to the exciting possibilities ahead as we continue to contribute to global health through this collaboration.

[For more details click here](#)

Celebrating Success:

Milestones & Achievements of the Past Six Months

This year, ARK Foundation has received multiple accolades both internationally and nationally. Project Manager, **Samina Huque** has won the prestigious Professor *Su May Liew Award 2024*. This award honors Professor Su May Liew's dedication to community engagement in healthcare research. It is granted by the NIHR Global Health Research Unit on Respiratory Health (**RESPIRE**) to support meaningful collaboration and positive change in RESPIRE projects.

“

I am immensely honored to receive the Su May Liew Award. This recognition not only boosts my morale but also validates the importance of our research. It motivates me to keep pushing the boundaries of knowledge and reinforces our team's dedication to excellence in both research and outreach. My focus has always been on tobacco prevention and TB-Tobacco research, and this award will support the development of a skilled research team. Our work will impact not only ARK but also influence think tanks and policymakers, helping shape effective policies for TB and tobacco control. Ultimately, our goal is to create a sustainable, tobacco-free environment and a healthier population.

”



Samina Huque
Project Manager, ARK Foundation

In addition, Sajib Saha, Senior Research Assistant of ARK, was awarded as the Best Paper Presenter at the International Public Health Conference-2024.



Sajib Saha
Sr. Research Assistant, ARK Foundation

“

I had an opportunity to showcase a part of our work titled 'How Community Dialogue Approach Can Act in Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance in Low Resource Settings: Experience from Cumilla, Bangladesh,' through a poster presentation at the International Public Health Conference-2024. After four rounds of evaluation, the conference committee awarded me Best Presenter among several prolific candidates in the Poster Presentation category. This award is dedicated to the COSTAR project team and the ARK Foundation.

”

Empowering TB Survivors

Formation of the TB Survivor Network

We are thrilled to announce the formation and institutionalization of the TB Survivor Network in Bangladesh.



Impact and Vision

The TB Survivor Network aims to raise awareness, advocate for policy changes, and support TB survivors. By amplifying their voices, we strive to push for stronger measures for TB prevention, treatment, and support.



Community Mobilization for TB Screening:

Sputum Collection Camp

As part of our ongoing efforts to combat tuberculosis, we are excited to announce the organization of a sputum collection camp in slum areas, driven by the dedicated work of our Community Volunteers (CVs). This initiative aims to engage more women slum dwellers, ensuring their active participation in TB screening and awareness activities.

Through this initiative, we aim to:

- Increase TB awareness and reduce stigma associated with the disease.
- Facilitate easy access to TB screening for slum dwellers.
- Encourage community involvement, particularly among women, in health initiatives.

Engaging Communities

to End TB: Courtyard Meetings in Urban Slums



As a part of our ongoing efforts to combat tuberculosis, we are excited to announce a series of courtyard meetings in urban slums, led by women and third-gender leaders dedicated to raising awareness and advocating for TB prevention and treatment.

By leveraging the influence and commitment of women and third-gender leaders, we are working to ensure no one is left behind in the fight against TB. Together, we can create healthier, more informed communities and move closer to a TB-free future.

Advocacy Workshops:

Empowering Community Representatives to End TB

As part of our ongoing commitment to fight tuberculosis, we recently organized a series of advocacy workshops involving diverse community representatives. These workshops brought together female parliamentarians, female school teachers, imams, journalists, housing society leaders, club members, ward counselors, and slum leaders.



The primary goal of these workshops was to empower these influential figures with the knowledge and tools necessary to raise awareness about TB prevention and treatment within their communities. By equipping these leaders, we aim to create a ripple effect, spreading vital information and fostering a collective effort to eradicate TB.

Raising Our Voices to End TB!

On World TB Day 2024, we united in front of the National Parliament Building (Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban) to raise awareness and demand decisive action to eradicate tuberculosis.

With banners held high and determination in our hearts, we rallied to capture the attention of policymakers and the nation, highlighting the urgent need for intensified efforts in the fight against TB. Every step we take and every voice raised brings us closer to a world free from this preventable and treatable disease.



Initiative to Make Bangladesh Railway Tobacco Free (IMBRTF)

Baseline and Endline Study-1st Phase

The “Initiative to Make Bangladesh Railway Tobacco-Free” (IMBRTF) is a Ministry of Railway effort to eliminate smoking in railway stations and on trains. The ARK Foundation conducted baseline and endline surveys at 10 railway stations to evaluate the situation and the effectiveness of interventions.



The baseline survey revealed inadequate enforcement of tobacco control laws. Consequently, the Ministry implemented measures such as increased signage and awareness campaigns. The endline survey showed significant improvements in law enforcement, though challenges remained in fully eradicating tobacco use and sales. The findings of the study were presented at a Ministry of Railways event, where key government officials along with ARK Foundation members, offered valuable insights and feedback.

Launching m-Health:

New Approach to Ensure Medical Adherence and Facilitate Information Sharing for the TB Patients of Bangladesh

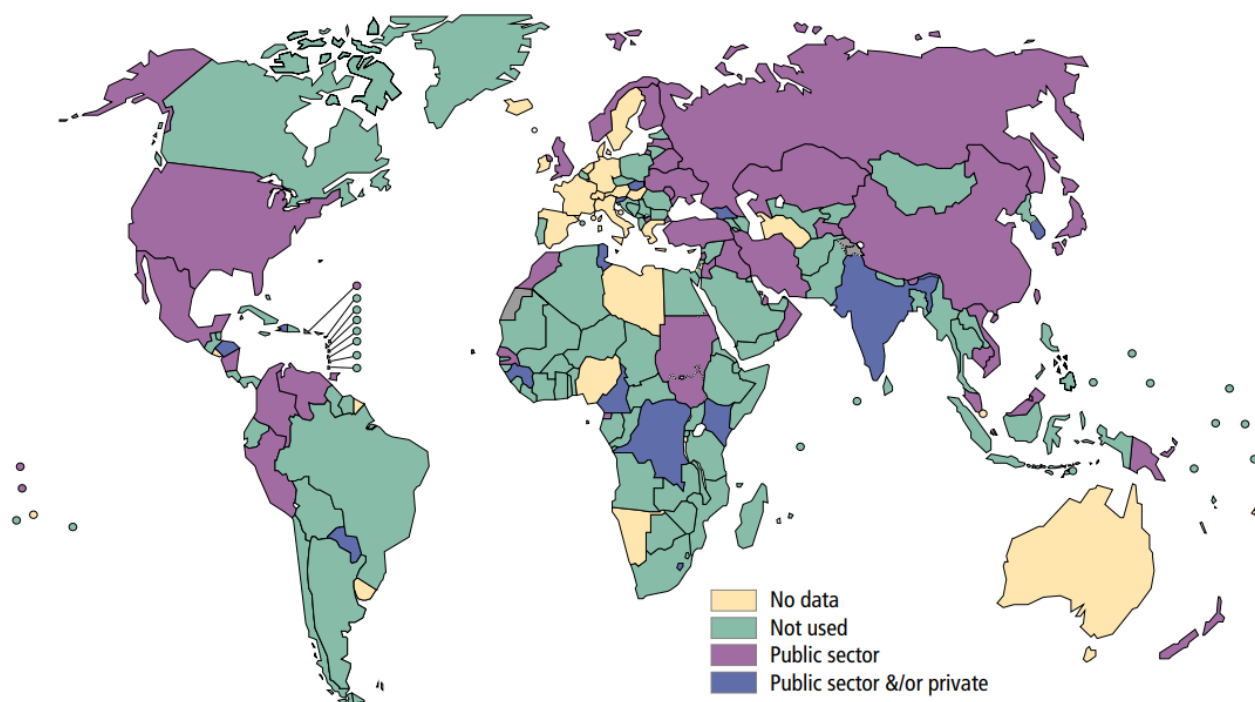


Figure 1: In 2016, were SMS, VOT, EMM or other digital technologies being used to support medication adherence in TB patients? [Source: WHO 2016-17]

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended an SMS-based program for TB patients as a standard, user-friendly, and cost-effective method to ensure medical adherence and facilitate information sharing. Collaborating with WHO, researchers developed a mHealth smoking cessation package called mTB-Tobacco, which can be delivered via SMS to mobile phones.

To streamline the delivery of these messages, a software named m-Health was developed, ensuring automated and efficient distribution of the mHealth smoking cessation package among TB patients. ARK Foundation, in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh and funded by the NIHR Global Health Research Unit on Respiratory Health (RESPIRE), launched the m-Health initiative in Bangladesh.

World No Tobacco Day 2024

The QUIT4TB team of the ARK Foundation goes beyond research and data by actively engaging with external stakeholders to present findings and share valuable information.



In celebration of World No Tobacco Day, the QUIT4TB team participated in the event, showcasing their efforts and initiatives. A host of dignitaries visited their booth and expressed appreciation for their impactful activities and contributions.

Case Study

with Person with Special Ability

The COSTAR (Community Solutions to Antimicrobial Resistance) project ensures the inclusion of all of the community members, including people with disabilities. A key milestone was achieved by the CD (Community Dialogue) facilitator ensuring the participation of this disadvantaged group in community dialogue sessions.

Initially, it was challenging to identify persons with disabilities in the project area but interviews revealed that their socio-economic condition was below the poverty line and they had no prior knowledge of antimicrobial resistance. However, through interviews, it was found that their socio-economic condition was under the poverty line, and they had no knowledge about antimicrobial resistance before attending the community dialogue.



They face challenges in travelling or moving anywhere, including accessing healthcare at the nearby Community Clinic/Upazila Health Complex. One participant mentioned that she got the opportunity to participate in the dialogue smoothly despite their physical challenges as she was invited by the CD facilitator. The participant's husband brought her to the dialogue and the CD facilitator arranged a seat for them. After attending the dialogue, she now understands the harmful effects of antibiotic intakes randomly. She is getting benefits in terms of seeking healthcare after attending the dialogue session as well.

Rural **PV Showcasing** Event

Chandina, Cumilla



In May 2024, ARK Foundation organized a participatory video (PV) showcasing event in Chandina, Cumilla, as part of Project COSTAR. PV is an impactful approach that enables community members to create videos addressing issues that affect their lives.

COSTAR integrated this approach along with Community Dialogue (CD) to understand the perspectives and behaviors of community members in response to PV films on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

[Click here to read more](#)

Strengthening **Urban Primary Healthcare System**

to Deliver NCD Care

On June 23, 2024, the ARK Foundation, in collaboration with the Non-Communicable Disease Control Programme (NCDC) of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) in Bangladesh, organized a workshop titled “NCD Data from Urban Primary Healthcare Facilities: Using Simple App”.



The workshop aimed to analyze the data collected from government outdoor dispensaries (GoD) between December 1, 2023, and May 31, 2024, as part of the project “Community-led Responsive and Effective Urban Health Systems” (CHORUS), to assess the effectiveness of the intervention on September 2023.

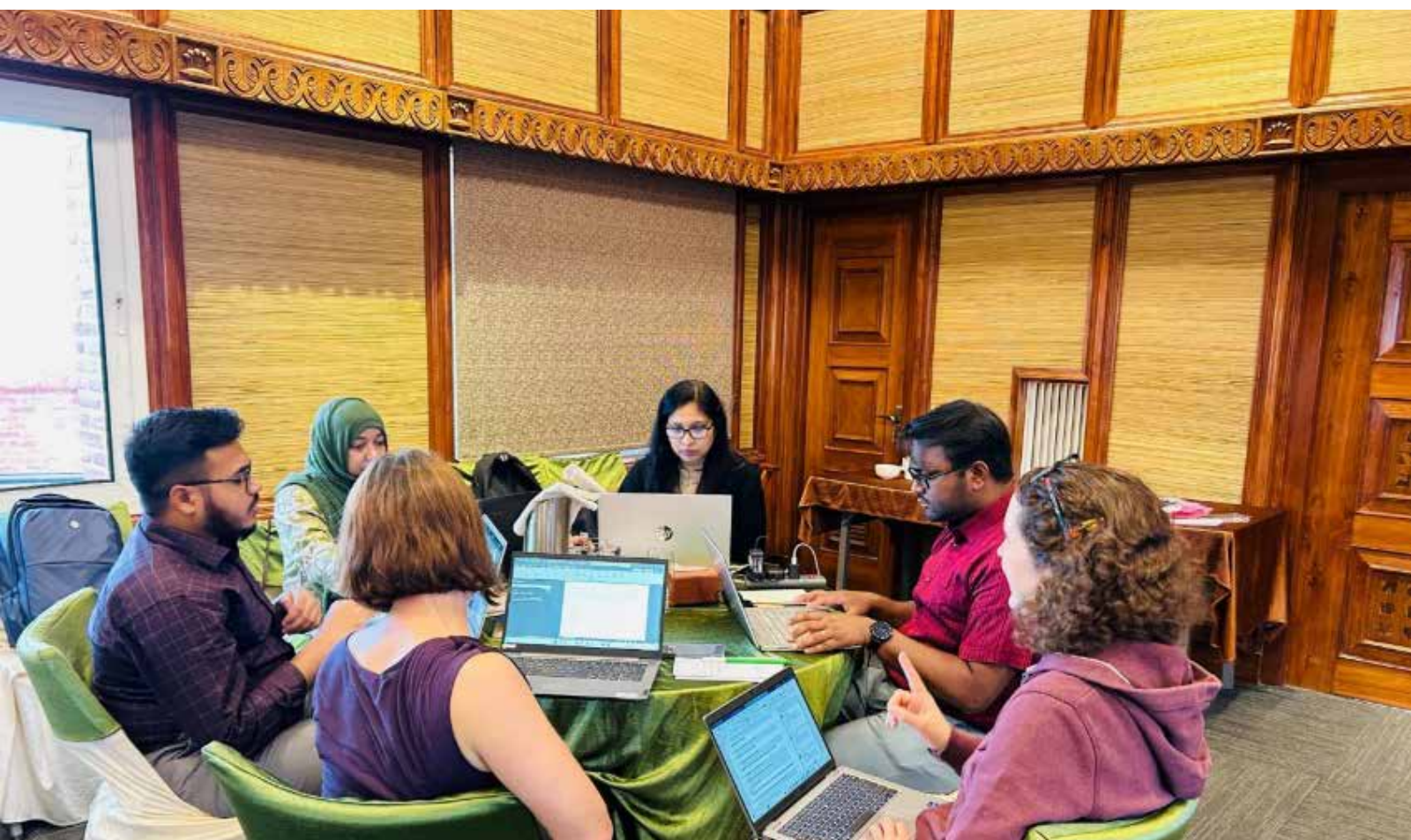
Additionally, ARK Foundation, Non-Communicable Disease Control Programme (NCDC), DGHS, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW), and Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) jointly conducted a 3-phase, 3-day training program for healthcare providers.

The program, held on June 11-13, June 24-26, and July 14-16, 2024, targeted doctors, nurses, paramedics, and counselors working in urban primary healthcare settings. It focused on the “National Protocol for Management of High Blood Pressure and Diabetes in Primary Healthcare Settings” to strengthen the NCD system.

Workshop on Process Evaluation

Nagarkot, Nepal

A workshop for the Community-led Solutions to Antimicrobial Resistance (COSTAR) research project partners was held from May 6-14, 2024, in Kathmandu, Nepal. The COSTAR Project aims to co-create, implement, and evaluate a community-led intervention, known as the Community Dialogue Approach (CDA), to address the drivers of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) at the community level.



The analysis workshop was attended by 14 researchers from the University of Leeds, Malaria Consortium, and HERD International Nepal. During this session, the team collaboratively developed a coding framework to analyze qualitative data, utilizing the same transcripts across country teams for pretesting. This was followed by finalizing the coding framework and mapping various types of data collected during the CDA implementation. The workshop concluded with a clear outline of the next steps for research outputs

Urban Dispensary:

Primary Health Care in Dhaka City

ARK Foundation's "Community-led Responsive and Effective Urban Health Systems" (CHORUS) project-1 is committed to transforming Urban Dispensaries (UDs) into critical source of hope and health for the underprivileged urban population. This program is pivotal in delivering primary health care services to city residents.



A researcher of the ARK Foundation, Umme Salma Anee, has written an insightful blog titled "Urban Dispensary: Primary Health Care in Dhaka City," which has been published on various platforms, including the international CHORUS website, the national site Publichealth24.com, and the ARK website.

[Read the blog here](#)

Design and Evaluate Appropriate **Strategic Purchasing Models**

and the Capacity Strengthening of Purchasers in Urban Bangladesh

CHORUS Project 2, titled ‘Design and Evaluate Appropriate Strategic Purchasing Models and the Capacity Strengthening of Purchasers in Urban Bangladesh,’ explores the current use of strategic purchasing within the urban primary healthcare (PHC) system in Bangladesh. It also aims to design, cost, and evaluate potential purchasing models, and build the capacity of purchasers to ensure the sustainable and continued use of effective strategic purchasing.

Phase 1 of this project was completed in early February 2024, which involved key informant interviews (KIIs) with policymakers, urban health experts, representatives from various government ministries, development partners, and local NGOs.

Phase 2 of the CHORUS Project will embrace a more community-centric approach.

The project will conduct in-depth interviews (IDIs) with community members to gain insights into their healthcare needs and preferences. Prior to these interviews, a consultative workshop will be held to gather community feedback, which will be used to finalize the semi-structured topic guide. Following the interviews, a validation workshop will be organized to share the findings with the community. Field activities for this phase are scheduled to commence in August 2024.



Physical Activity

National Guidelines for Bangladesh

ARK Foundation collaborated with the Non-communicable Disease Control (NCDC) program and formed a technical working group to develop the Physical Activity National Guidelines for Bangladesh. This initiative is a critical step toward promoting health and well-being nationwide.



Social determinants of health

and Their Relationship with Clinical and Economic Outcomes in People with Type 2 Diabetes: A Quasi-Experimental Study in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh among noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) is now a significant public health burden. Literature review indicate social determinants of health (SDOH) can be more important than health care or lifestyle choices in influencing clinical and economic outcome of T2DM patients. Hence ARK Foundation in partnership with Bangladesh Diabetic Association (BADAS) is conducting a quasi-experimental research study in Bangladesh to address social determinants of Health (SDOH) for better health and economic outcomes of T2DM patients.

The study is being conducted among T2DM patients of 40 years and above and suffering for 5 years or more attending at BADAS centers of eight districts where prevalence of T2DM was found more from earlier study evidence.

Quantitative data are being collected through baseline, follow up and endline survey. Qualitative data will be collected through in-depth interview of stakeholders. Following interventions are provided for the recruited T2DM patients: a) send necessary text messages for management of T2DM including adherence to prescribed treatment, lifestyle advices to respective mobile numbers ; (b) bear required expenses for diagnostic test of selected biomarkers during visit at the time of recruitment (baseline survey) and then follow up visit at 4th, 8th and 12th month (endline survey) at BADAS centers.



SSB Policy Prioritization Research in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is experiencing a surge in diet-related chronic health conditions, such as obesity and diabetes, which disproportionately affect women, children, and low-income groups. Sugar-Sweetened Beverages (SSBs) are consumed in large quantities in these populations.

Research on types and patterns of SSB consumption to inform public health policy and interventions in Bangladesh, is limited.



This study aims to:

- 1) Identify the types of SSBs consumed in Bangladesh;
- 2) Determine the sociodemographic, health, and economic factors influencing SSB consumption in Bangladesh from 2016 to 2022
- 3) Identify areas of improvement in Bangladesh's Household Income and Expenditure Surveys (HIES) from 2016 and 2022.

CHORUS Innovation Fund

Round 2: Drug seller and AMR study

Bangladesh has a high burden of Antimicrobial resistance (AMR), with many bacteria and fungi showing resistance to common antibiotics. Among different stakeholder's drug sellers play a vital role in increasing the threat to AMR by selling antibiotics without a prescription, selling counterfeit antibiotics, or providing incorrect advice on how to use antibiotics.



Hence as part of CHORUS Innovation fund round 2, ARK Foundation in partnership with local stakeholders and with the technical support of University of LEEDs and financial support of Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is implementing drug seller and AMR study entitled “Exploring the Potential of Drug Sellers in Shaping the Approach to Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in Urban Health Settings Bangladesh”.

Mapping of drug sellers, KAP survey, training of drug sellers and prepare participatory video, co-design workshop with stakeholders and develop training package, KII with stakeholders and policymakers will be carried out in the study.

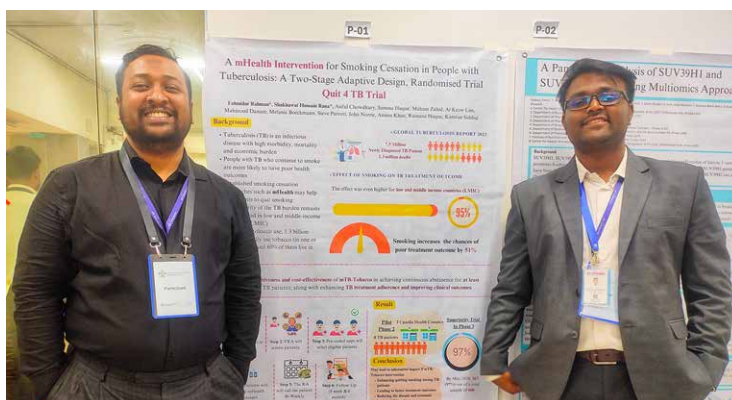
International Public Health Conference 2024

At the International Public Health Conference 2024, held at IEDCR on June 8, Asiful Haidar Chowdhury, Research Fellow of ARK Foundation, delivered an oral presentation in the Scientific Session on “Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).”



His presentation focused on the “Prevalence and control of non-communicable diseases among people living with severe mental illnesses: Evidence from a cross-sectional study.” The session was chaired by Professor Dr. Sohel Reza Chowdhury (National Heart Foundation) and co-chaired by Professor Dr. Helaluddin Ahmed (National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital).

The Quit4TB Bangladesh team also presented a poster on their trial process, providing a valuable opportunity to network with health researchers.



Internship Experience

ARK Foundation, as part of its regular capacity building activities offering internship program to young graduates interested in public health and health policy research. As part of this prestigious program, several interns accepted through a highly competitive process.

I have been working as an intern at ARK Foundation for the past three months. On this journey of learning new things in a completely new environment made me gather a handful of notable experiences. At ARK Foundation I honed essential research skills, worked in a cross-functional team where teamwork meant crucial and chasing the deadlines on time fostered me to enhance my understanding on Public Health. I believe the learnings that I have accumulated from this internship will take me a long way in the days to come.

Tamima Ahmed



My internship at the Ark Foundation was a transformative experience that solidified my passion for public health and my commitment to making a meaningful impact in the field. This experience enhanced my ability to communicate complex information effectively and fostered my analytical skills. I will always remember the organization's encouragement and assistance throughout the entire time.

Maysha Farzana

Publications

Articles

- **Title:** The Effect of Adult Smoking Behavior on Children's Exposure to Secondhand Smoke. An Analysis Based on Salivary Cotinine Levels Among Children in Dhaka and Karachi.
Journal Name: Nicotine & Tobacco Research ([Full Article](#))
- **Title:** Core Outcome Sets for Trials of Interventions to Prevent and To Treat Multimorbidity in Adults in Low and Middle-Income Countries: The COSMOS Study.
Journal Name: BMJ Global Health ([Full Article](#))
- **Title:** Own Price Elasticities of The Demand for Sugar-Sweetened Beverages in Bangladesh.
Journal Name: BMC Public Health ([Full Article](#))
- **Title:** Is Smokeless Tobacco Use Associated with Lower Health-Related Quality of Life? A Cross-Sectional Survey Among Women in Bangladesh.
Journal Name: Tobacco Induced Diseases (TID) ([Full Article](#))
- **Title:** Perspectives on Reforming the Tobacco Tax Administration System in Bangladesh to Enhance Public Health.
Journal Name: BMJ Global Health ([Full Article](#))

News & Media

- পরোক্ষ ধূমপানের ভয়াবহতা এবং বাংলাদেশ
(Published in: The Bangladesh Moments) ([Read here](#))
- জনস্বাস্থ্য সঙ্কট এবং আসন্ন বাজেটে কোমলপানীয়ের উপর উচ্চহারে কর আরোপের গুরুত্ব
(Published in: The Daily Alokito Bangladesh) ([Read here](#))

Conference Papers

- **Title:** Does their association between multi-morbidity and health related quality of life among severe mental illness patients?
Conference Name: 24th World Congress of Psychiatry of World Psychiatric Association (WPA) (Mexico City, Mexico)
- **Title:** Navigating Strategic Purchasing for Equitable Urban Primary Healthcare in Bangladesh: Facilitators and Barriers in the Current Arrangements (Poster Presentation)
Conference Name: International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH 2024) (Marrakech, Morocco)
- **Title:** Evaluating Active Transportation Policies to Promote Physical Activity and Combat Non-Communicable Diseases in Urban Bangladesh: A Qualitative Study (Oral Presentation)
Conference Name: International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH 2024) (Marrakech, Morocco)
- **Title:** How Prepared Are Government Urban Dispensaries, And NGO Clinics to Manage Hypertension and Diabetes in Urban Dhaka? A Cross-Sectional Study (Oral Presentation)
Conference Name: International Conference on Urban Health (ICUH 2024) (Marrakech, Morocco)
- **Title:** Changes in NCD management within urban primary health care system: Analysis of 2014 and 2017 national surveys ([Read here](#))
Conference Name: Tropical Medicine and International Health (ECTMIH) (Utrecht, Netherlands)
- **Title:** Where do Bangladesh's urban poor go for NCD care, and do they receive adequate advice for NCD prevention and control? ([Read here](#))
Conference Name: Tropical Medicine and International Health (ECTMIH) (Utrecht, Netherlands)



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