

Perspective

Metamorphosis of a medical graduate: From a general physician to a public health expert

Tanzila Naureen

After completion of SSC and HSC successfully, I could enter the MBBS course, in the Dhaka Medical College (DMC), thanks to the Almighty!! Here, in this communication, I intend to present my own perspective humbly scribbling down my brief bio-sketch as a doctor (physician).

To begin with, I started my 1st year-MBBS course with full enthusiasm but got halted a bit- understanding how huge a load my brain, memory and mental strength should be required to prepare in dedicating to learn medical science at a modest level. Nevertheless, by the Almighty's grace I could successfully cross over that vast ocean of MBBS.

I joined my internship right at the DMCH starting with the Dept. of Medicine. As an intern I actually started feeling the amazing vibe as a doctor so much so, that I forgot all my hard past of 5 year-long medical college days. I must admit, here, that 'Community Medicine' really got my heart and full devotion shaking as we completed our training in rural health complex (part of internship).

Right within a year or so of my internship, I appeared the exam of Govt. BCS (Health Cadre) and passed out. I was posted first in Choddogram, Cumilla.

Soon after, I applied for Australia Awarded Scholarship and was nominated to study MPH and in January 2014, I flew to Australia to pursue an MPH degree from the University of Melbourne- one of world's best universities.

Though I always had a keen interest in public health, this very course opened an unknown door of medical science when we started learning:

- Epidemiology and Biostatistics,
- Health Policy and Hospital management, etc....
- Public Health, Public Health Nutrition, Food safety & food security, etc.,
- Environmental Health/ Climate Change.....etc.. what not!

I was much eager to utilize the expertise that I learnt in Melbourne University to apply or replicate those in Bangladesh. Thus, on coming back to my motherland, I joined back to my Govt. Health Services and got posted at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) in in 2016. I was so fortunate to work with country's eminent public health experts, like Prof. M Mahmudur Rahman, the frontliner in One Health Sector home and abroad, and also with Prof. Meerzadi Sebrina Flora, the most versatile lady who took care of our country's massive on-going COVID-19 pandemic (during 2018 through 2021)- the two personalities who really supported me a lot to build up my career in public health, so much so!

Currently, in 2019, I had been posted at the Dhaka Medical College (DMC)- my parent institution, as one of the faculty members at the Dept. of Community Medicine. However, I must spell it out aloud that it was not an easy task for me to leave my beloved IEDCR which was so exciting and enjoyable. Though teaching and mentoring young minds have always intrigued me, leaving IEDCR was difficult since I gathered a lot of practical working experience in epidemiology and public health quite seriously.

Correspondence: Dr. Tanzila Naureen, Faculty Member, Department of Community Medicine, Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh.

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Well, getting back to Dhaka Medical College, I got the opportunity of my choice to teaching community medicine/ public health to both under- and, post-graduate medical students, my primary responsibility remains to teach and mentor undergraduate ones. Currently, I conduct tutorial classes, take item examinations for MBBS course and also guide them often to various field and lab surveys.

Recently, I guided my students for field level research activities for the residential field site training program (RFST) and, also, supervise day visits to certain places of huge public health importance.

I get to attend/ supervise various training programs and lead workshops both within Dhaka Medical College and in other national level institutions, hospitals & research organizations.

To sum up:

As a public health expert, I do enjoy teaching young minds who I render constant encouragement and motivate them to learn more about details of public health. I can assure there is a lot of opportunities in

Bangladesh to grow as a public health personnel- which our country demands a lot more than existing ones, including devoting to public/community health research which has enough possibilities and potential in our country. Finally, it is crucial to mention our recent experience on COVID-19 Pandemic that made everyone (from public to administrators to clinicians, all including emergency room doctors) fully realize the importance of public health towards saving lives of million people not only in our country but also across the globe.

Bottom Line:

- This is in short, my humble journey, on how a general physician could flourish as a public health expert. Hope these pathways, will encourage our future physicians to evolve as public health experts!
- It's not that easy a task to excel as a public health expert but is largely possible, I believe in! Any new generation physician can shine as a public health expert if he/ she is determined!

Welcome to the world of our public health community!!