

Medical Assistants/ Sub-Assistant Community Medical Officer: The Physician Assistant Comparable in Bangladesh

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A recipient of the Medical Assistant Certificate with a diploma in Medical Faculty, Khondoker M. Hossen has worked for 5 years with NGO/INGOs organizations and inside hospital settings in Bangladesh. His career began within the field of medicine with Sans Frontiers MSF-Holland and continued through multiple other health organizations including Terre des hommes and World Concern, MEDAIR, and the Emergency Border Medical Team. He has provided services in the past as a medical consultant and currently provides medical care, IPC Management, in one of the world's largest refugee camps in the country, Rohingya. pencilly trained IPC, MHPSS, CMR, SRH & Family planning and Immunization. He well-versed in Advocacy and Lies with government and other health authorities, stakeholder management, Health Coordination and networking with sectors and working groups, negotiation, team management including conflict resolution and Leadership. Fortuitously he has also experienced working with community outreach activities, effective referral system, logistic management, outbreak response (Diphtheria, Measles, Chickenpox, and Covid-19), Emergency health and medical management, Primary health care, Sexual & reproductive health (SRH), Child health, GBV; Mental health and CMR service at field level. He achieves Improving Care in Health Emergencies' (The DICE program) is a 9-months program from Doctors Worldwide-UK, about Migration Refugee Health. Got registered Medical Assist from Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council Certificate: D-10207

General Information:

The Medical Assistant Training (MAT) course began in 1976 after the partition of Bengal in 1947 resulted in the development of both the State Medical Faculty of East Pakistan and State Medical

Faculty of Bangladesh. These faculties have been holding examinations and awarding diplomas and certificates to candidates who have completed their course requirements.

The State Medical Faculty of Bangladesh was established in 1972 from the continuation of The Bengal Act-1914 for the purpose of holding examinations and awarding diplomas to L.M.F. and M.M.F doctors. After partition of Bengal in 1947, The State Medical Faculty of East Pakistan was created for the same purpose. Subsequently Compoundership, Dressership, Para-medical Technicians, Medical Assistant and Village Doctor (Palli Chikitshak) courses have been introduced and this Faculty has been holding examinations and awarding diplomas and certificates to the successful candidates. To prescribe syllabi for Medical Assistants, Palli Chikitshaks and all kinds of Technicians namely, Community Health Workers, Mid-Level Ophthalmic Assistant, Health and Sanitary, Laboratory Medicine, Radiology & Imaging, Dentistry, Sanitary Inspectorship, Physiotherapy, Radiotherapy, Occupational therapy, Operation Theatre Assistant, Intensive Care Assistant, Cardiac Perfusion, Cardiology and Prosthetic & Orthotics.

Entry Criteria:

In order to be accepted into one of the MAT schools each applicant is required to have some science background. An Secondary School Certificate (SSC) (SSC O-level; O-Level is the final certification for secondary school, to be taken at fifth form or year 11 at approximately age 17 (or age group 14-16) passing grade in their science courses along with biology is a prerequisite. Further GPA requirements are determined by government standards; however, most programs have required at least a GPA of 2.5 or higher in the 2019-2020 year. No previous clinical experience is necessary. Each interested applicant must register and complete a Medical Assistant Training School admission test through the State Medical Faculty of Bangladesh (SMFB).

<https://dghs.gov.bd/index.php/bd/component/content/article/86-english-root/home-page/5133-1st-year-admission-notice-in-mats-iht-session-2019-2020> Those who are accepted will be notified.

Education:

Educational programs aim to produce MAs with the knowledge, skill and attitude to provide promotive, preventative, and first line curative care to the local communities. There are currently nine government funded programs and 209 private programs available, producing approximately 30,000 graduates per year. Out of these programs 18 different institutes for MA training providing examinations and certifications through the SMFB.

With cohorts beginning in either January or July of each calendar year, MAT course extends over the course of four years with three of those being primarily academic focused followed by an additional year of clinical exposure with a Diploma degree being awarded. The beginning of clinical transition occurs during the second year, but becomes more extensive in the last year and a half of the program. The completion of each year is followed by a faculty examination. If a student does not pass this examination at the end of their annual term, they will be allowed to continue academic learning into the subsequent year; however, they will not be able to sit for the next annual examination without having passed the prior. Post completion of the final faculty

examination, students are required to undergo a twelve month compulsory internship. So long as each student completes all three annual examinations with a passing grade, attends a minimum of 75% of both didactic and clinical courses, and completes their clinical/field visit requirement, the institution will submit on behalf of the student their conferral for the provision of their certificate. An outline of the typical curriculum can be reviewed in Table 1.

Table 1. The MAT school curriculum at a glance.

Year of Program	Duration	Medical Course	Clinical Requirement	Examination
1	12 mo	English Computer Science Community Health Medical Ethics Anatomy & Physiology	None	Y1 examination
2	12 mo	Pharmacology Pathology & Microbiology	Medicine Pediatrics General Surgery OB/GYN	Y2 examination (must have passed Y1)
3	12 mo	General Medicine General Surgery Allied Subjects	Continuation of above courses as well as Community Medicine Health Management	Y3 examination (must have passed Y1/Y2)
4	12 mo	None	9 mo @ a general/Sadar Hospital 3mo @ Upazila Health Complex	Apply for certificate once complete

Financing Education:

Admission fees vary by institution and are not publicly posted. Each student is required to pay for their own admissions test regardless of the planned institution of study. Only public schools obtain full program funding by the government. All private institutions are at the cost of the applicant. There are additional fees for each examination as well as registration fees for final certification which are currently being updated by the SMFB.

Accrediting/Regulatory Bodies:

The accrediting bodies are as follows:

1. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh <http://www.mohfw.gov.bd/>
2. Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) <https://www.dghs.gov.bd>

The regulating board is the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council recognizes the profession and gives the professional licensing certificate.

The MOH recognizes and supports the profession but currently there is no other involvement of the Ministry of Education (MOE) or Ministry of Labour (MOL).

Professional Licensure:

Annual examinations provided by the State Medical Faculty of Bangladesh <https://smfb.edu.bd/article/about-us> with final Accreditation/Certification rewarded by the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council <https://www.bmdc.org.bd/>

The State Medical Faculty of Bangladesh
203, Shahid Syted Nazrul Islam Sharani
(86, Bijoy Nagar)
Dhaka-1000
Bangladesh
+88-02-9564049

The licensing database is hosted by the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council at <https://www.bmdc.org.bd/search-mats>

Provision of Medical Care/Scope of Practice:

At this time, MAs are only given the right to provide supportive inpatient and outpatient medical services. Their scope can extend to provision of medical counseling to patients on causes of disease, ways to mitigate disease, and first line treatment of disease. Currently they are only allowed to prescribe 73 different medications (See Table 2).

Table 2. Current prescriptions/formulations able to be rendered by MAs.

MEDICATIONS BY TITLE		
Aspirin [Tablet]	Atropine [Injection]	Neomycin/Gentamicin/Bacitracin or combination [Ointment/ Cream/Dusting Powder]
Paracetamol [Tablet/ Syrup/ Suspension/Suppository]	Benzoic acid and Salicylic acid [Ointment]	Permethrin [Ointment/Cream]
Diclofenac [Gel]	Benzyl Benzoate [Lotion]	Povidone Iodine [Gargle/Motthwash]
Ibuprofen [Tablet]	Chlorhexidine (Lotion/Cream)	Silver Sulphadiazine [Ointment]
Methyl Salicylate [Gel]	Chlorhexidine plus Cetrimide [Cream/Solution]	Calcium [Tablet]
Albendazole [Chewable Tablet]	Chloroxylenol [Lotion/Cream]	Ferrous (Sulphate, Gluconate & Fumarate) [Tablet/ Capsule] Syrup]
Amoxicillin [Tablet/Capsule/Syrup/Suspension]	Gentian Violet [Solution]	Folic acid [Tablet]

Ampicillin [Tablet/Capsule/Syrup/Suspension]	Rehydration Salt (ORS)	Lidocaine 1%. 2% without Adrenaline [Injection]
Chloroquine phosphate [Tablet/Syrup]	Ranitidine (Tablet)	BCG/DPT/TT/Polio/Measles/Hepatitis B/Influenza
Cloxacillin (Capsule/Suspension)	Potassium Permanganate Granules tar Gargle	DT/DPT/Polio/Tetanol/Diphtheria vaccine
Co-trimoxazole [Tablet/Suspension]	Emergency Contraceptive [Pill]	Hepatitis B vaccine
Doxycycline [Capsule]	Cholera fluid	Tetanus Ig
Griseofulvin [Tablet/Suspension]	Dextrose in water (5%, 25%, 50%)	Lidocaine 1%. 2% without Adrenaline [Injection]
Phenoxy Methyl Penicillin [Tablet/Suspension]	Contraceptive Low Dose [Pill]	Redistilled water (pyrogen free)
Procaine Penicillin [Injection]	Multivitamin [Tablet/ Capsule/Drops]	Diazepam
Pyrantel pamoate [Suspension]	Riboflavin [Tablet]	Phenobarbitone
Quinine [Tablet/Injection]	Vitamin A [Capsule]	ErgonEtrine/Methylergometrine Maleate
Pyrimethamine with Sulphadoxine (Tablet)	Vitamin B Complex (individual or combinations) [Tablet/ Syrup/ Drops]	Misoprostol
Tetracycline/Oxytetracycline [Tablet/Capsule]	Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid) (Chewable Tablet/Syrup)	Oxytocin
Glyceril trinitrate [Tablet/Spray]	Zinc [Tablet/Syrup]	Hydrochlorothiazide [Tablet]
Methyldopa [Tablet]	Chloramphenicol (Eye/Ear Ointment/Drops)	I.V saline of various strength (0.9%, 0.25%, 0.18%) with 4 % Dextrose/0.9% Saline without Dextrose
Propranolol [Tablet/Capsule]	Chlorpheniramine Maleate [Tablet/ Syrup]	Xylometazoline O. [Nasal Drops]
Antacid Chewable [Tablet/Suspension]	Dextromethomhen [Syrup]	Milk of Magnesia [Suspension]
Glycerin [Suppository]	Promethazine Theoclate [Tablet]	
Hyoscine n-butylbromide (Tablet/Injection)	Salbutamol [Tablet/ Inhaler]	

Maintaining Role:

There are no Continuing Medical Education/Continuing Professional Development hours required.

Job Opportunities:

Professional opportunities are currently limited at this time. All employment for MAs is via recruitment only from government organizations as a Sub-assistant Community Medical Officer (SACMO) or NGOs that maintain MA appointments. No official job postings are searchable at this time.

References

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