

**EDITORIAL**

## Organization to Move Pain Education in Bangladesh

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Despite the miracle of medical advancement, “pain free” is still a puzzle, and the world is trying to solve it. “Pain” can be conceptualized as a “public health concern” due to its effects on patients’ quality of life as well as social, psychological, medical and economic aspects<sup>1</sup>. “Pain medicine” is a discipline within the field of medicine that is concerned with the prevention of pain and the evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of persons in pain<sup>2</sup>. Suboptimal management of pain is still an overgrown concern worldwide<sup>3</sup>. With the stress of COVID-19 pandemics on healthcare resources, it is more important now to highlight the epidemiology of patients of pain given its significance on resource allocation. Chronic pain is widespread in society, and 13.5 to 47% of the population is affected by it<sup>4</sup>. Almost all adults have experienced at least one episode of musculoskeletal pain associated with injury or overuse<sup>5</sup>. Limited knowledge, inadequate understanding, biases and myths, and insufficient emotional preparation prevent competent pain management. The lack of education and training in the discipline of pain medicine among health professionals has been highlighted as one of the barriers to optimum pain management<sup>6</sup>. Surveys reveal a continuing lack of pain content in health science curricula despite a worldwide need to improve pain management practices<sup>7</sup>. Schools and universities with health sciences programs, prelicensure educational programs, education accrediting bodies, and faculty across the globe are encouraged to incorporate essential pain content into curricula with the aim of producing graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to be competent in contemporary pain management<sup>8</sup>. Views towards pain education have changed over the years. Many curricula are evaluated by different bodies and implemented to improve the outcome. Curricula need to modernize from focusing on pain as a diagnostic indicator of disease to pain as a multidimensional, complex entity in itself<sup>9</sup>. To address this unmet challenge of “Education and training on pain medicine”, the International Association for the Study of Pain declared 2018 the ‘Global Year for Excellence in Pain Education’<sup>10</sup>. To bridge the gap between knowledge and practice, four different domains have been determined to make improvements-public and government education, patient education, professional education and education research<sup>9</sup>. Comprehensive pain assessment and management is multidimensional. It requires collaboration between different specialties. The IASP also emphasized curriculum changes that are needed to prepare future pain physicians.

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From 2010 to 2012, nine subgroups of the IASP Education Initiatives Working Group developed pain curriculum outlines based on the four components of the IASP core curriculum<sup>10</sup> Pain is still perceived as an unavoidable part of life in most low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)<sup>11</sup>. Inadequate awareness, unavailability of training and reluctance to use pain relievers in medical and nursing staff can lead to ineffective pain management. Education and training of health care staff can play a vital role in making pain management practices more effective for patients, particularly those living in LMICs. The Bangladesh Society for Study of Pain (BSSP) is one of the organizations that is working on advocacy for “pain medicine”. This was formed in 1997 with 11 (eleven) working Anaesthesiologists, which became an affiliated chapter of International Association of the study of Pain (IASP) in 2004<sup>12</sup>. They have been delivering “Essential Pain Management (EPM)” courses in Bangladesh since 2013<sup>13</sup>. The BSSP initiated the formation of the South Asian Regional Pain Society (SARPS) during the conference held in Dhaka with representatives from all SAARC members<sup>14</sup>. There are a total of 18 EPM workshops have been conducted in Bangladesh providing training to over 400 participants. EPM is the first course of its kind in Bangladesh that trains and equips doctors and nurses with the basic knowledge of pain management. Currently, there is no national guideline for managing pain patients. The coordinators noted that BSSP is currently formulating a policy regarding this<sup>13</sup>. Educating and providing proper training to future clinicians is of utmost importance to meet the challenge of suboptimal management of pain. A strong internal framework, better advocacy for pain education and collaboration between multiple organization bodies may be useful for conceptualizing this public health threat.

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