

ALTERNATIVE MEDICAL CARE

WHO Extends Support for Modernization

The present Government of Bangladesh pledges modernization of the unani, ayurvedic and homeopathic medical care as an alternative to the widespread allopathic system. Alternative medicine has been playing a significant role in the healthcare delivery system in the developing countries of this region from time immemorial.

Although tremendous progress has taken place in the field of allopathic medicine, particularly in synthetic pharmaceuticals and antimicrobials, the practice and use of alternative medicines are continued throughout the country even today. Bangladesh, due to its geographical location and climatic condition, is a favorable home for the growth and use of herbal medicines. The World Health Organization is providing financial and technical support for the improvement of unani, ayurvedic and homeopathic systems of medical care in Bangladesh.

There are two medical colleges for alternative medicines in Dhaka: the Government Unani and Ayurvedic Degree College and the Homeopathic Degree College. Each college has a 100-bed hospital. The duration of course for each is 5 years, followed by one year of internship. The degrees offered by these colleges are: BUMS (Bachelor of Unani Medicine and Surgery), BAMS (Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery), and BHMS (Bachelor of Homeopathic

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Medicine and Surgery). In addition to the colleges for graduate-level education, there are 12 unani diploma colleges (11 private and one government), 8 ayurvedic diploma colleges, and 41 homeopathic diploma colleges in Bangladesh. The diplomas offered by these colleges include: DUMS (Diploma in Unani Medicine and Surgery), DAMS (Diploma in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery), and DHMS (Diploma in Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery). Diplomas are offered after completion of 4 years of academic courses and six months of internship. The Diploma certificates are offered by the Board of Unani and Ayurvedic System of Medicine and Board of Homeopathic Medicine. Bachelors degrees in any of the above-mentioned disciplines are given by University, e.g., Dhaka University and registration for Graduate Doctors are given by DGHS.

Table 20.1 summarizes the academic and training institutions for alternative medicines in Bangladesh.

Table 20.1. Academic institutions for teaching and training in alternative medicines in Bangladesh

Name of institution	Number			Duration of course	Duration of internship	Degree offered	Certifying authority
	Total	Government	Private				
Government Unani and Ayurvedic Degree College	1	1	0	5 years	1 year	BUMS (Bachelor of Unani Medicine and Surgery)); BAMS (Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery)	University of Dhaka
Homeopathic Degree College	2	1	1	5 years	1 year	BHMS (Bachelor of Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery)	University of Dhaka

Table 20.1 Continued

Name of institution	Number			Duration of course	Duration of internship	Degree offered	Certifying authority
	Total	Government	Private				
Unani Diploma College	12	1	11	4 years	6 months	DUMS (Diploma in Unani Medicine and Surgery)	Board of Unani and Ayurvedic System of Medicine
Ayurvedic Diploma College	8	0	8	4 years	6 months	DAMS (Diploma in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery)	Board of Unani and Ayurvedic System of Medicine
Homeopathic Diploma College	41	0	41	4 years	6 months	DHMS (Diploma in Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery)	Board of Homeopathic Medicine

To create opportunities for providing patient-care services through alternative medicines, the number of sanctioned posts of medical officer (including those under HPNSDP 2011-2016) has been increased to 468, with 156 for unani medicine, 156 for ayurvedic medicine, and 156 for homeopathic medicine. Posts of 487 support personnel (compounders) have also been created.

To grow medicinal plants and create awareness of the local people about medicinal plants, 467 demonstration herbal gardens have been established, one in each district hospital and upazila health complex premise. One herbal gardener (herbal assistant) has been appointed for each herbal garden

to take care of the garden. As of now, a total of 575 alternative medical care (AMC) health personnel and staff are working at different places. The total number of sanctioned posts is 1422. According to reports collected from selected 45 District Sadar Hospitals in 2011, about 20% of the OPD patients are treated by Alternative Medical Care (AMC) doctors. Apart from the government services, some of the graduates and diploma-holders are working in different NGOs and private organizations. About 80,000 different categories of AMC doctors are practising in our country and about 700 industries are producing Unani, Ayurvedic and Homeopathic drugs.

Table 20.2. Current human resources for alternative medical care (December 2011)

Name of post	Status of the post	Sanctioned (including those under HPNSDP)	Filled-up	Filled-up as % of sanctioned posts	Vacant	Vacant as % of sanctioned posts
Medical officer for unani medicine	I	156	15	9.61	141	90.39
Medical officer for ayurvedic medicine	I	156	14	8.97	142	91.03
Medical officer for homeopathic medicine	I	156	15	9.61	141	90.39
Compounder	III	487	64	13.14	423	86.86
Herbal assistant	III	467	467	100	-	-
Total		1,422	575	40.44	847	59.56