

High prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders among Bangladeshi women deserves attention

MSDs are a group of conditions that affect the musculoskeletal system including muscles, bones, joints, and connective tissues. They can cause pain, discomfort, and reduced mobility, which can have a significant impact on a person's quality of life.¹⁻³ Despite being one of the most vulnerable groups, musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) among women in Bangladesh have been largely ignored.

MSDs among Bangladeshi women are caused by a variety of factors, including poor posture, repetitive motions, heavy lifting, and working in awkward positions for long hours. Many Bangladeshi women work in the garment industry where they are exposed to these risk factors daily. In addition, the lack of ergonomically designed workstations and inadequate training in proper lifting techniques contribute to the problem. MSDs can have a significant impact on the health and well-being of Bangladeshi women. They can cause pain, fatigue, and decreased productivity, and can even lead to permanent disability in severe cases. MSDs also have economic consequences where affected workers might not be able to perform their jobs and require costly medical treatment.^{1,4}

In Bangladesh, both men and women are particularly at risk of developing MSDs due to their workload and lack of access to proper health care. Many women in Bangladesh work in physically demanding jobs, such as agriculture, garment factories, various law enforcement agencies, shop sales assistants and domestic workers, which can put significant strain on their musculoskeletal system. In addition, cultural and societal norms often prevent women from seeing a doctor, further compounding the problem. As a result, without proper diagnosis and treatment, many women suffer from musculoskeletal disorders. In order to address this issue, it is important to raise awareness of MSDs among women in Bangladesh, especially among housewives and those women who are in formal jobs. The householder and employer should provide ergonomically designed workstations (they can adjust the height of their cooker, they can use cutting boards and knives, the chair and tables should be adjustable with the machines or appliances they normally use), provide training on proper lifting techniques and encourage regular breaks to prevent MSDs from occurring. It is vital that government takes action to address this issue by introducing workplace regulations to prevent work-related MSDs and improving access to

health care for women. Furthermore, educational campaigns should be launched to raise awareness about the importance of early diagnosis and treatment.^{1, 4-6}

In conclusion, the high prevalence of MSDs among Bangladeshi adults especially women are a significant public health issue that needs urgent attention. By taking action to address this issue, we can improve the quality of life for millions of women in Bangladesh.

Palash Chandra Banik

Department of Non communicable Diseases, Bangladesh University of Health Sciences, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Email: palashcbanik@gmail.com

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2395-9049>

M Mostafa Zaman

Department of Epidemiology, Ekhaspur Centre of Health, Chandpur, Bangladesh

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1736-1342>

References

- Zahid-Al-Quadir A, Zaman MM, Ahmed S, Bhuiyan MR, Rahman MM, Patwary I, Das BB, Hossain SA, Paul S, Shahin A, Rahman M, Haq SA. Prevalence of musculoskeletal conditions and related disabilities in Bangladeshi adults: a cross-sectional national survey. *BMC Rheumatol.* 2020 Dec 16;4(1):69. doi: [10.1186/s41927-020-00169-w](https://doi.org/10.1186/s41927-020-00169-w).
- Hossain MD, Aftab A, Al Imam MH, Mahmud I, Chowdhury IA, Kabir RI, Sarker M. Prevalence of work related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) and ergonomic risk assessment among readymade garment workers of Bangladesh: A cross sectional study. *PLoS One.* 2018 Jul 6;13(7):e0200122. doi: [10.1371/journal.pone.0200122](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0200122).
- Jahan N, Das M, Mondal R, Paul S, Saha T, Akhtar, Khan MAM, Banik PC. Prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders among the Bangladeshi garments workers. *SMU Medical Journal.* 2015; 2(1):102-13. URL: <https://www.i-scholar.in/index.php/SMU/article/view/85626>.
- Nabi MH, Kongtip P, Woskie S, Nankongnab N, Sujjarat D, Chantanakul S. Factors associated with musculoskeletal disorders among female readymade garment workers in Bangladesh: A comparative study between OSH compliant and non-compliant factories. *Risk Manag Healthc Policy.* 2021 Mar 15;14:1119-1127. doi: [10.2147/RMHP.S297228](https://doi.org/10.2147/RMHP.S297228).
- Habib MM. Ergonomic risk factor identification for sewing machine operators through supervised occupational therapy fieldwork in Bangladesh: A case study. *Work.* 2015;50(3):357-62. doi: [10.3233/WOR-151991](https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-151991).
- Momen Majumder MS, Hakim F, Bandhan IH, Razzaque MA, Zahid-Al-Quadir A, Ahmed S, Chowdhury MR, Haq SA, Zaman MM. Low back pain in the Bangladeshi adult population: a cross-sectional national survey. *BMJ Open* 2022;12:e059192. doi: [10.1136/bmjopen-2021-059192](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-059192).