





GUEST EDITORIAL

Advancing rehabilitation science in Bangladesh: A call to action for a brighter future

Taslim Uddin   | Md Quamrul Islam  

Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Bangladesh Medical University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

CorrespondenceTaslim Uddin
taslimpmr@bsmmu.edu.bd**Publication history**Received: 24 Oct 2025
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It is with immense pleasure and a profound sense of purpose that we present this special issue of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) Journal, dedicated to physical medicine and rehabilitation (PMR). This endeavor marks a significant milestone for BSMMU (currently, Bangladesh Medical University, BMU) and the burgeoning field of rehabilitation medicine in Bangladesh. As we navigate an increasingly complex global health landscape, the importance of PMR, with its holistic evidence-based approach to restoring function, enhancing participation, and improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities, has never been more critical.

PMR, also called physiatry, a distinct medical specialty, has evolved significantly since its emergence in the aftermath of World War II. Although rooted in earlier practices, PMR emerged as a distinct specialty in the mid-20th century, shaped significantly by war, epidemics, sports, professional demands, environmental factors, and accidents, reflecting its crucial role in addressing complex rehabilitation challenges during both peace and conflict. [1]

In Bangladesh, PMR has steadily grown since the mid-1960s, tirelessly working towards addressing the diverse needs of our population. [2] The World Health Organization (WHO) now rightly recognizes 'function' as the third health indicator, alongside mortality and morbidity, underscoring a global paradigm shift towards a more comprehensive understanding of health. The recent WHO resolution on "Strengthening rehabilitation in health systems" further amplifies the urgent call to escalate rehabilitation services

worldwide, aiming to address the vast "unmet rehabilitation" needs that persist globally [3]. With approximately 16% of the world's population living with some form of disability, as per United Nations estimates, the demand for integrated rehabilitation services, multidisciplinary rehabilitation team work led by a PMR physician, is indisputable [4,5].

The bedrock of any medical specialty's advancement lies in its commitment to education, training, and rigorous research. While clinical knowledge is gained through dedicated education and training, it is scientific publication that serves as the indispensable conduit for disseminating this knowledge among peers and the wider scientific community. Publications foster intellectual discourse, validate new interventions, identify best practices, and ultimately translate research findings into tangible improvements in patient care. In the rapidly evolving field of PMR, bridging existing knowledge gaps is paramount to modernization and progress. This necessitates the initiation of new research projects and, crucially, the effective dissemination of their findings through appropriate, high-impact journals.

This special issue of the BSMMU Journal is more than just a collection of articles; it is a strategic platform designed to invigorate and accelerate research in disability, functioning, and rehabilitation within Bangladesh. We extend a heartfelt gratitude and a strong encouragement to all scientists, particularly the younger generation of researchers and clinicians, to engage actively in scholarly pursuits and to publish their valuable work within rehabilitation medicine-related scopes. For too long,

Key messages

Physical medicine and rehabilitation has become vital in restoring function and improving lives. This special Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Journal issue celebrates Bangladesh's growth related to physical medicine and rehabilitation since the 1960s, promoting research, education, and innovation. By fostering collaboration and young researcher engagement, it strengthens rehabilitation science and aligns with WHO's global call to advance function-focused, inclusive healthcare.

researchers in our region have faced challenges in finding suitable avenues for publishing their specialized work. This special issue provides a unique advantage: an accessible and dedicated forum within "their" own journal, fostering a sense of ownership and community. Notably, this issue is further enriched by the inclusion of a few scientific papers contributed by esteemed foreign faculty, fostering international collaboration and diverse perspectives.

By providing this dedicated platform, we aim not only to showcase the innovative research being conducted in Bangladesh but also to stimulate further inquiry, collaboration, and methodological rigor. Every published paper contributes to the collective knowledge base, strengthens the scientific foundation of PMR, and directly enriches the specialty [6]. Ultimately, this collective effort will translate into enhanced services and improved outcomes for people with disabilities, fulfilling our shared mission of promoting health, function, and participation.

We are confident that the contributions within this special issue will serve as a testament to the dedication and scientific prowess of PMR scientists in Bangladesh. We look forward to a future where this momentum continues, fostering a vibrant research culture that consistently pushes the boundaries of rehabilitation medicine for the betterment of society.

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