

Pioneering and Upgrading the Postgraduate Research and Training: Role of RTMD of Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons

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Abstract:

The Research and Training Monitoring Department (RTMD) has been playing an important role in research and training activities. RTMD is designed to enhance the qualities of clinical training, research skills and the development of other soft skills of post graduate trainees of different faculties. RTMD monitors the training of doctors who will appear in the fellowship examination in various disciplines. It is also involved in the timely evaluation of research activities of health professionals in this field. The

core activities of the department are now not only confined to the training and research, but it extends its wing to help the trainees technically by Research clinic and financially by the handsome research grants. Time to time updating of training manual by different modern tools by the department is also appreciating. Here the important activities of the RTMD are being highlighted in its all aspects.

Key words: RTMD, Research activities, Training monitoring.

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Introduction:

By the initiative of the father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS) was established by a Presidential order in June 1972. Since then, BCPS has been the pioneer in developing postgraduate medical education and training in this country. Fellows and Members of this College, encompassing various disciplines, constitutes the major manpower of specialists of the country, serving as teachers and many of them are working in different parts of the world with high reputation. Over time, many new departments have been introduced at BCPS and constant development of those are a continuing process. Research and Training

Monitoring Department (RTMD) is one of the most important department among all other departments where research and training activities are monitored throughout. RTMD monitors the training of doctors who will appear in the fellowship examination in various disciplines. The other important motto of this department is the timely evaluation of research and dissertation and provision of inputs with regards to enhancement of quality research and capacity building of health professionals in this field. This report is an effort to highlight the major activities in the field of research and the various effective ways to supervise and monitor the training of the Prospective Fellows of this college on their journey to become a Fellow.

Background of establishment of RTMD:

Since beginning of journey of BCPS the training and research activities were monitored from a wing of the College. Later, on with increase in responsibility it was transformed into a department. According to 120th council decision of BCPS, RTMD first started as a separate department. On 20th August, 2008 Prof Md Ruhul Amin was appointed as it's first Honorary director for effective functioning of RTMD. RTMC was also formed and this committee meets regularly with its members to make the policy, recommendation and guidance for proper

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List of Executive Body since starting the journey of RTMD:

Sl. No	Honorary Chairman	Honorary Director	Honorary Member Secretary
1	Prof Mahmud Hasan (2008-2011)	Professor Md. Ruhul Amin (2008-2011)	Professor Md. Ruhul Amin (2008-2011)
2	Prof Md Ruhul Amin (2011-2013)	Prof A.B.M Muksudul Alam (2011-2015)	Professor A.B.M. Muksudul Alam (2011-2015)
3	Prof Mahmud Hasan (2013-2015)	Prof Iffat Ara (2015-2019)	Professor Iffat Ara (2015-2019)
4	Prof Mohammad Shahidullah (2015-2017)	Prof Md Abul Kashem Khandaker (2019-2021)	Professor Shohael Mahmud Arafat (2019- till date)
5	Prof Mahmud Hasan (2017-2021)	Prof Abul Bashar Md Jamal (2021- till date)	
6	Prof Md Ridwanur Rahman (2021-till date)		

functioning of RTMD and National Professor Mahmud Hasan was the founder chairman of this committee.¹

Areas of Activities of RTMD:

RTMD is dedicated to improve the qualities of clinical training, research skills and the development of other soft skills of post graduate medical students. RTMD has many activities for the professional development of prospective fellows namely in following sectors

1. Clinical Training Monitoring
2. Research Activities
3. Adjunct activities

Clinical Training Monitoring:

Training monitoring would be the pivotal part of a successful training module in every institution. The College had performed well in training monitoring since its journey. Lots of present day luminaries in the profession gone through old training format. Rather as the time progresses the College brought changes to match with the rapidly changing scenario in the world of medical education. To bring the training at different institutions under an uniform format and standard, BCPS tried to make a standard and structured monitoring system all over the country in its affiliated institutions and RTMD is playing the pivotal role in orchestrating the uniform and high quality training for its stake holders.²

Training monitoring unit of RTMD department monitors the training of FCPS trainees

- by forming Institutional Training Monitoring Committee (ITMC),
- training progress report interview

- Providing financial support to the FCPS trainee who are unemployed.

Formation of Institutional Training Monitoring Committee (ITMC)

The very first training progress report submission and interview of the students has been started for the session of January, 2012. This initiative was taken only for the students based on Dhaka at BCPS campus. Since 2015 RTMD has formed ITMC in different accredited Medical Colleges and institutes to decentralize the monitoring system.³ ITMCs are formed in different institutions which are playing important roles to maintain the quality of clinical training. Other accredited Medical Colleges/ Institutes will start the process very soon. ITMCs are responsible for regular formative assessment and feedback for the trainees.

Training progress report submission

When students start clinical training after passing FCPS Part I examination, Submission of progress report is mandatory to RTMD in every 6 months. RTMD has incorporated Case based discussion (CBD) and Clinical evaluation exercises (Mini-CEX) as assessment tools which should be enlisted in the progress report.⁴ Approximately 22600 training progress reports have been submitted at RTMD, BCPS by the trainees since January 2012 up to December 2021.⁵

Training Progress report interview

A team comprising of senior teachers of different disciplines are formed by RTMD who visits different institutions and they assess the progress report of the trainees in person.

Financial support for Trainees

BCPS has taken the initiative to grant an Honorarium amounting to 20,000/- per month to each trainee since July 2019. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of Bangladesh has allotted approximately 12 crore takas for this purpose every year in two sessions. This initiative aims to ensure the trainees to support economically during their training period so that they can concentrate on their professional skill development. This initiative aims to abolish honorary training system and further ensuring accountability at the same time helping the trainee to get their basic necessity.

Number of Trainees who received Honorarium since its inception

Terms	Duration	Number of members
July, 2019	July to December	174
January, 2020	January to July	465
July, 2020	July to December	412
January, 2021	January to July	524
July, 2021	July to December	699
In total =		2274

Training of the Trainers on Training Monitoring

A Training monitoring module was prepared by an expert committee and was disseminated by a workshop in presence of the Councilors, RTMC members and top executives of all faculties of BCPS. This module was approved by the BCPS Council on 7th dec, 2016. Training workshops are being done regularly with trainers from different faculties regarding “training monitoring and dissertation guiding” in BCPS premises as well as outside of BCPS. Another TOT workshop on “Supervisor’s skill development” has been conducted in BCPS premises and also outside of Dhaka jointly organized by the RTMD and IST, DGHS, MOH & FW. A focus group discussion was held on 4th December 2021 at Department. The main motto of the program was for the improvement of ITMC in various institutions.

Research activities:

After the establishment of RTMD, it has been playing a very important role to improve the skills of FCPS trainees on research activities by conducting workshop on research methodology, arranges for review of research protocols and dissertation/ thesis, research grant management for fellows, research clinic as well as dissertation/ thesis grant management for trainees and fellows.

Training on Research Methodology

This has been an ongoing program since February 2010 which is a Which is a mandatory prerequisite to appear FCPS final examination for every candidate after qualifying FCPS Part I examination, before submitting protocol and dissertation. Research methodology training program used to conduct three days in general. Very recently from April, 2022 it has been converted to four days so that it becomes more effective and the participants can practically develop a protocol to have a hand on experience. Research methodology training not only confined to Dhaka, RTMD also organizing the training program outside Dhaka.

Protocol and Dissertation Review

The review of submitted protocol and dissertation are being done in the BCPS premises by the senior fellows who have research experiences. Before the establishment of RTMD, the submitted protocol and dissertation used to be evaluated by the reviewers selected by the examination committee now all the Protocol and Dissertation Review has been conducted by the RTMD since 2009. After 2013 according to the Council decision now review have been done at RTMD offices. A subcommittee (consisting of 3-5 members) from each faculty of BCPS selects the reviewers of respective specialty for evaluation of dissertation/thesis protocol and dissertation/thesis. Subcommittee members of different faculties come to the RTMD and select the reviewers. RTMD plays the coordinating role in the total work.

Existing procedure of RTMD, BCPS for Dissertation/ Thesis Protocol

After passing FCPS Part-I every trainee has to attend 3/4 days training workshop on Research Methodology. Trainee submits the protocol to Ethical Committee, subsequently it goes to the RTMD, then after Protocol reviewing meeting the submitted protocol are sent to the reviewer for correction or acceptance. Finally, RTMD issues the acceptance letter to the trainee. On the other hand, the dissertations are reviewed by the two reviewers. Protocol should be submitted 9 months and for dissertation 3 months before appearing FCPS part II exam for the students who passed their FCPS part I exam before January 2010. Now the protocol submission time has been changed to 18 months before and for dissertation 6 months before appearing FCPS Part II exam for the students who passed their FCPS part I exam on and after July 2010.⁶ Thesis writing, submission and thesis defense has been become mandatory prerequisite for different subspecialties since 2002 and from January 2020 for all the trainees. RTMD plays a vital role in the whole process.

Dissertation/Thesis grant for FCPS Trainees

BCPS has taken the initiative to grant a sum of 50,000/- per dissertation/thesis to trainees, guide & co-guide since 2021-2022 economic years. This initiative aims to ensure for the improvement of research work. It is believed to strengthen the sense of responsibility and fulfill the financial need of the trainees. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of Bangladesh has allotted 2.5 crore taka for this purpose.⁷

Research Grant Management for Fellows

BCPS has taken the initiative to manage research grants for fellows since 2020-2021 fiscal year through the HPNSDP program. This initiative aims to ensure qualitative research work from the prospective fellows of the college. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of Bangladesh has funded allocated money for those research purposes.

Research clinic

The Research Clinic is a way to advise and support trainees who are working on a dissertation or thesis, which is a prerequisite to appear on the final FCPS examination. Trainees who have passed part I examination have to submit a research proposal known as the Protocol to the RTMD of the BCPS. While conducting the work according to the Protocol, problems may arise. The trainee may not understand the methodology, or the methodology may prove to be difficult to follow, tests may not be possible, sample size may not be achievable, there may be difficulties in writing the dissertation/thesis as well as calculating statistical analysis. In some instances, it may be necessary for the trainee to seek help. BCPS should provide such advice. The Research Clinic was designed to render this help. it has been started on 2 April 2022.

Adjunct Activities:**E logbook**

The E Log book development has been started since 2013 by the body of software experts with the collaboration of IT department for monitoring of training and research activities. A preliminary form has already been demonstrated before the college authorities. Few meetings and lecture programs had been organized at RTM department since 2013 to till now.

Website and Software basis activity of RTMD

Training Progress report for the trainees, Sub-Specialty and Preliminary for FCPS trainee data are entered into the software and update by RTMD regularly. Besides supervisor Database entry and updated and Honorarium for Honorary trainees are online based which are done by RTMD and candidate respectively. On the other hand, protocol entry and Dissertation management are software basis while the accepted protocol title update is done in online. All the guidelines regarding protocol, dissertation/thesis & training monitoring have already been uploaded to the BCPS website and may be accessed at www.bcps.edu.bd in the Research & Training section.

Publication of Training Manual in Collaboration with RTMD

RTMD has taken the initiative to write and publish some Training manual of Research Methodology for helping the students from the very beginning. The process has been started before the establishment of RTMD and many advanced versions have come out in time, Essentials of Research Methodology, Training Program on Dissertation writing, Research Methodology Training Manual, Manual of writing Dissertation/Thesis are few examples of those books.

Activities of RTMD

Expansion of RTM Department

RTM Department's journey begins on the Block-B, 6th Floor from 2008 in short range. Gradually, its scope began to grow. As a result, the department needs to be relocated from there. Later it was shifted to the 2nd floor of the same block which is now being arranged in a modern way.

References

1. The terms of Reference (TOR) of RTMC have been developed on 17/08/2009 in 127th Council meeting of BCPS
2. Training monitoring Protocols have been approved on 02/11/2010 in 134th Council meeting of BCPS
3. The terms of Reference (TOR) of ITMC have been approved on 24/04/2017 in 167th Council meeting of BCPS
4. Training monitoring tools have been finalized on 07/12/2016 in 164th Council meeting of BCPS
5. Six monthly mandatory training progress report submission to BCPS have been decided on 15/02/2012 in 141st Council meeting of BCPS
6. Dissertation management guidelines have been approved on 02/05/2010 in 131st Council Meeting of BCPS
7. Dissertation/Thesis grant for FCPS Trainees have been approved on 26/08/2021 in 188th Council meeting of BCPS