HEARD@UNSW (Health, Rights and Development) and
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All welcome

HEALTH IN BANGLADESH –

HOW HAS A POOR COUNTRY DONE SO WELL?

Bangladesh, the eighth most populous country in the world with over 153 million people, has been applauded as an exceptional health performer. Improvements in the survival of infants and children under 5 years of age, life expectancy, low fertility, immunization coverage, and tuberculosis control in Bangladesh are part of a remarkable success story for health in the country. This is despite low spending on health care, a weak health system, and widespread poverty. Yet the nation still faces considerable problems, including deep poverty and malnutrition, exacerbated by an evolving set of 21st century challenges.

One of the key authors of The Lancet's series will take a comprehensive look at one of the "great mysteries of global health", investigating a story not only of "unusual success" but also the challenges that lie ahead. In doing so, the author will illustrate what lessons Bangladesh has to offer with regard to gender equity and female agency in health, as well as innovative, community-based strategies for healthcare delivery.

Biodata:

Dr. Mushtaque Chowdury is the Vice Chair and Interim Executive Director of Bangladesh Rural Action Committee (BRAC), one of the world's largest NGOs. He has worked in health, poverty alleviation, and primary education. In his roles at BRAC, he has helped the organization play a central role in providing health, education, and microfinance services to help alleviate poverty. BRAC has a presence in most villages of Bangladesh, employs more than 120,000 people, and has trained 105,000 community health workers. In addition, BRAC programmes can be found in 10 other countries of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. In 2004, Mushtaque helped found BRAC University's James P. Grant School of Public Health, and as its Dean for 5 years he was instrumental in creating its Masters in Public Health programme. Outside of Bangladesh, he has considerable experience of the wider Asian health context, having previously worked for the Rockefeller Foundation as Senior Adviser in crossborder disease surveillance projects in the Mekong countries of Southeast Asia. He's been involved with seminal global health initiatives, notably the UN Millennium Project's Taskforce for Child and Maternal Health. In 2004, he became the first Bangladeshi to be offered a professorial position at an Ivy League university, Columbia University. Dr Chowdhury has an MSc from London School of Economics and a PhD from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He was a co-coordinator of the Lancet Bangladesh Series.