

Experts favour medical, dental college entry tests

Staff Correspondent

HEALTH officials, professionals and educationists are in favour of holding tests for enrolment at medical and dental colleges.

They made the opinion at a roundtable styled 'Medical Admission: Test or GPA' organised by the Bangladesh Health Reporters' Forum at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University on Friday.

A decision on the issue may come from a health ministry meeting scheduled for April 10, said ministry officials.

Prime minister's health adviser Syed Modasser Ali recommended holding admission tests by medical and dental colleges, although he said, 'We don't have enough time to introduce a new system now. It should be discussed elaborately. If we take a decision overnight, it might be suicidal for all.'

The discussants recommended evaluating both admission test results and the GPAs of secondary school certificate and higher secondary certificate examinations.

They also suggested modifying the current examination system comprising 100-mark multiple-choice questions by including an aptitude test for better enrolment.

BSMMU vice-chancellor Pran Gopal Datta said as questions had been raised over the admission coaching rackets, the health ministry could hold the admission tests quickly, say within 10 days after the end of HSC examinations.

Health secretary M M Niazuddin said there should be extensive discussion on the issue. 'It can be a combination of GPA and admission test,' he remarked.

Director of medical education ABM Abdul Hannan mentioned that principals of different medical colleges at a meeting on March 24 wanted to take admission test for enrolling students.

A system of holding entry tests for enrolling students at medical colleges is there in most countries except in Sri Lanka, noted Bangladesh Medical Association former president Rashid-e-Mahbub.

BMA treasurer Ehsanul Kabir Jogiul and Bangladesh Private Medical Practitioners' Association secretary general M Jamal Uddin also expressed their support for holding entry tests.

Ideal School and College principal Shahanara Begum said as the system of education had changed fast, teachers were facing problems in teaching as well as evaluating answer papers of examinations.

The government last year cancelled admission tests but had to restore it on a court order in the wake of student protests.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, there are 7,056 seats at 22 public and 53 private medical colleges and 1,437 seats at 23 dental colleges and units.

Dhaka University Faculty of Medicine dean M Ismail Khan and Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College principal ABM Maqsoodul Alam, among others, also took part in the roundtable chaired by BHRF president Toufiq Maruf.