

Threat to International Accreditation Cancellation of Bangladesh's MBBS Degree: A setback for medical education

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International accreditation plays a key role in making sure the global acceptance of medical education, enhancing movement for graduates globally, and ensuring a high quality of education.¹ There have been significant concerns regarding the potential loss of international recognition of Bangladeshi MBBS degree, if certain accreditation standards are not met. Here, the aim of this editorial is to look over the imputation of this decision, explore its potential effect on medical education and healthcare, and suggest policies to overcome this crisis.

International accreditation is a validation process ensuring that a country's medical education system meets global standards. The cancellation of this status for Bangladesh's MBBS degree would give a impression that the curriculum, clinical training, or regulatory process are not meeting the expectations of accrediting bodies such as the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) or the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates.²

The implication of this decision may be far reaching. Firstly, Bangladeshi medical graduates may face difficulties in obtaining licenses or pursuing postgraduate education abroad, especially in the United States, Canada, and other Western nations.² Secondly, Bangladesh has been a popular target for medical graduates from countries such as India, Nepal, and Malaysia. If the accreditation is lost there will be significant reduction of international student admissions, affecting the revenue streams from this sector.³ Finally, if medical graduates are unable to receive international training, they will not be able to achieve advanced medical knowledge and skills may be declined, potentially downgrading the quality of healthcare delivery in Bangladesh.¹

Many areas need to be addressed to keep the accreditation, but several factors may have contributed to producing this crisis. The factors are: A) inadequate practical training, backdated curricula, or lack of research integration could have played a role.³ B) weak regulatory oversight, absence licensing exams, or inadequate teaching standard might have raised concern.¹ C) medical colleges, particularly private institutions and some government institution, may have struggled to maintain the necessary infrastructure, teacher-to-student ratios, and patient exposure required for international recognition.²

In December 2021, to secure the international accreditation, the Bangladeshi government validated the draft of the 'Bangladesh Medical Education Accreditation Act 2021' to match medical education with world standards and anchor international accreditation.⁴ Later, in September 2023, the Bangladesh Medical Education Accreditation Bill, 2023 was accepted in Parliament. This legislation established an accreditation council responsible for recognizing medical educational institutions in the country. According to this law, anyone seeking to provide medical treatment or pursue medical studies abroad must obtain approval from the Bangladesh Accreditation Council. This step was crucial to maintain the international credibility of Bangladesh's MBBS degree, especially considering WFME's guidelines.⁵ Despite these legislative efforts, concerns persisted about the timely implementation of the accreditation process.

To restore international accreditation and ensure the long-term credibility of Bangladesh's medical education, urgent steps must be taken. Firstly, aligning medical education with international best practices, incorporating modern teaching methodologies, and ensuring strong clinical training programs.³ Secondly, the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC) must enhance its regulatory framework, ensuring stringent accreditation criteria for medical colleges.¹

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Thirdly, infrastructure development: investment in hospital facilities, faculty training, and research initiatives can enhance the quality of medical education.² Fourthly, collaboration with global medical institutions and accrediting bodies to seek technical assistance and develop exchange programs [3]. Finally, the government and medical education authorities must engage in diplomatic efforts to negotiate the reaccreditation process with international bodies.¹

In conclusion, the threat to cancellation of international accreditation for Bangladesh's MBBS degree is cautionary tales for the medical education system of Bangladesh. Urgent reformation, boost up of governance, and involvement with global accrediting agencies are crucial to regaining Bangladesh's position in international level. The future of thousands of enthusiastic doctors depends on immediate and prompt strategic action to address the deficiencies and regain the trust of global recognition bodies to keep the international accreditation of MBBS degree.

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