

## **Understanding and Intervening in Informal Markets in Health in Developing Countries**

<i>Title</i>	<b>Lessons from an intervention programme to make informal health care providers effective in rural Bangladesh</b>
<i>Presenter</i>	Shehrin Shaila Mahmood
<i>Overview</i>	<p>Informal healthcare providers, known as Village Doctors, practicing modern medicine dominate the healthcare service in Bangladesh. They have long been in existence and their number is growing quite steadily in response to a large and increasing healthcare market in the face of the inadequacy of formally trained providers. A large majority of the villagers contact them when they are sick. They are resident members of the community, and easily accessible in terms of proximity and cost. They make their living by selling drugs in an unregulated market. It was observed that the drugs they use are inappropriate in nearly 80% of cases. An intervention programme was implemented to reduce their inappropriate use of drugs and to establish their accountability to community members. The intervention package included training on DOS and DON'TS for 11 major conditions in terms of use of drugs and other related sickness management behaviour, including referral. A system of evaluation of their competence by an oversight committee using an evaluation tool was implemented and all Village Doctors scoring above a threshold level of score were declared Shysthya Sena (Health Soldier). The Shysthya Sena were given a crest and introduced to the community in large meetings as a Shysthya Sena. Their performance was monitored through exit interviews from patients visiting Shysthya Sena. This presentation reports the intervention, the process of implementation, challenges faced, solutions offered, and the impact of the interventions on reducing inappropriate practices by Village Doctors.</p>