

Hospital of compassion, care and counselling

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A large number of elderly people come to avail medical facilities at the Probin Hospital (hospital for the elderly) at Agargaon.

The hospital is an integral part of the non-profitable organisation Bangladesh Association for the Aged. The association, which has 48 branches scattered all over Bangladesh, was established by Dr. A.K.M. Abdul Wahed in 1960.

Majeda Begum, a 68-year-old was sitting for her turn to be examined by a doctor at the hospital. "I have been coming here since 1980 as they provide quality treatment," she said.

Hospital sources said that at least 3,000 elderly patients like Majeda visit the hospital every month. Earlier, there were slums around the hospital and the affluent class felt discouraged to come. But the slums have been demolished and now people from all spheres of the society arrive for treatment.

The Association for the Aged has 2,630 registered members. However, the

hospital offers services to any aged person and that too at a nominal cost.

"They get to see a doctor by paying just five Taka. In some cases, free medicine is provided," said Dr. Mansur Ali, assistant director of the hospital. He added that younger patients can also receive treatment in the outdoors of the hospital by paying Tk. 10.

With 15 full time doctors and five part-timers, Probin Hospi-

tal offers medical care at a cheaper cost than other private hospitals. It charges Tk 70 per day for a bed in general wards while a cabin charge is Tk 200 per day. Any operation costs 50 per cent less than in other hospitals, claimed the assistant director. He added that they are compelled to charge that 50 percent as the hospital does not have a full time surgeon.

"We have a proper operation

theatre but we have to hire surgeons when needed," he said. Only eye operation is not being performed at present as the hospital lacks necessary instruments.

The token money from out-

door patients is the only source of income for the hospital. There is no regular flow of funds but last year the Health Ministry had allocated Tk 27 lakh, informed sources.

The patients are satisfied

with the service provided by the hospital. "It costs at least Tk 250 at other private hospitals for a single physiotherapy appointment. But it is only Tk 80 here," said Rahima Akter who brings her husband over for physiotherapy frequently. "Moreover, the place is less crowded and clean," she added.

"It is convenient for everybody as doctors for different ailments are available under one roof. My daughter-in-law brought me to see an eye doctor. I also got my loose tooth fixed," said 70-year-old Chand Banu.

"Unlike in other hospitals, people here are very compassionate towards us," said Alimul Haque, an elderly patient coming from Pিরerbaag. He said he often brings his relatives from Chandpur to this hospital for medical check up.

"Most of the elderly people do not get people to listen to them. They are mentally half cured once they find us listening to their complaints with patience," said a doctor at the hospital. Patients are also counselled by psychologists whenever required.



An elderly man being treated at the hospital, which has been serving the old for quite a long time.

6x3

12x2

12x3

6x3