THALASSEMIA Support Initiative in Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka

Star Campus Desk

"NO More Thalassemia"- with this slogan, the students of the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka organised an awareness programme on Thalassemia disease on 8th May, the International Thalassemia Day. The programme was organised by TSI (Thalalassemia Support Initiative), a voice for Thalassemia awareness, support and care, members of which are Md. Raquibul Islam Russeau, Tanzina Alam Monty, Tasnia Safdar and Sonia Rezina. They have been conducting multimedia presentation about the disease in all the classes of Business Studies Faculty for the last one month to aware the students about Thalassemia disease, the reason, consequences and ways of prevention.

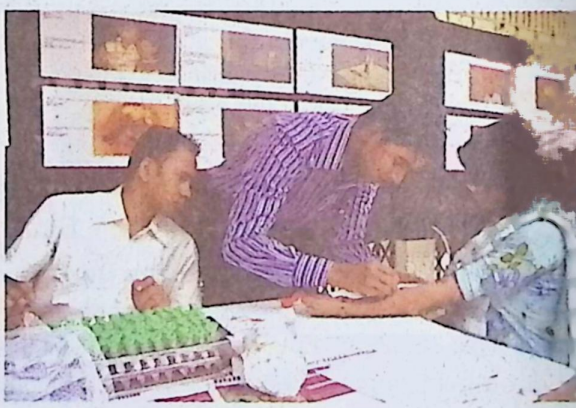
Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder characterized by abnormally less hemoglobin and fewer red blood cells in the body, which results in severe anemia. Regular blood transfusion is the only treatment to this disease, otherwise the patient usually dies within the first decade of his/her life. But the regular blood transfusion causes iron overload and the patient would die within second or on the third decade of his/her life. Patient may have a normal life with regular transfusion and iron chelation, which is very costly. Only bone marrow transplant can cure the disease which is out of reach of our common people.

If both the parents are Thalassemia carriers then the probability of their children being Thalassemia patients is likely to be high. Every year almost 7500 children are born with this disease only because of the ignorance of the people in our society.

Although Thalassemia cannot be cured by conventional treatment, it can be effectively prevented by a "Pre-marriage Blood Screening Test." Public awareness and education programme is the only way to combat the disease.

TSI's vision is to stop the increasing number of Thalassemia patients in Bangladesh. With the purpose in mind, they arranged an Electrophoresis Test (a simple blood test) among a few students of DU to identify whether they are Thalassemia carriers or not. The test was conducted by DMCH (Dhaka Medical College Hospital) medical team and sponsored by Novartis (Bangladesh) Ltd and Dr. Mahmood Osman Imam, Professor, Department of Finance. Later on, it was found that 4 among 52 students are Thalassemia carriers!

The awareness programme was organised at the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka. The programme started with a seminar on "Mobilizing Youth to Prevent Thalassemia". The chief guest was the Dean of the Faculty of Business Studies Professor Dr. Abbas Ali Khan, special guest was the Head of Department of Hematology, DMCH Professor Dr. M.A. Khan and the chairman of the seminar was Professor Dr. Khondoker Bazlul Hoque. A presentation was given by Dr. Mizanur Rahman (Department of Hematology, DMCH) describing the reasons and consequences of Thalassemia Disease. The programme also included a Blood Donation part for



the Thalassemia patients and a Photo exhibition by Mr. Noor Alam featuring the stories of Thalassemia patients.

Dr. Mahmood Osman Imam and Dr. Jahangir Alam Chowdhury of Department of Finance, Dr. Khondoker Bazlul Hoque, Chairman, Department of International Business, University of Dhaka, and all the doctors of DMCH Hematology Department, specially Dr. Mizanur Rahman and Dr. Salma Afrose gave the students full support for the programme and MM Services limited sponsored the programme with posters and leaflets for spreading awareness about the disease. Friends, classmates and well wishers of TSI are always there to inspire them wholeheartedly which made the initiative a successful one and also appreciated by everybody. TSI wishes to work on these types of awareness programmes in the future and wants everyone to join with them to build a community with "No more Thalassemia."

(For those who want to cooperate with TSI, please send your concern to *poroma99@yahoo.com*)