

Strength, Cancer Training and Preventive Activities (Awareness and Screening) of Alo-BT

Strength

One major non-communicable disease is cancer, which affects millions globally and remains a leading cause of death. Cervical and breast cancers are two of the most common cancers affecting women worldwide. Cervical cancer is a significant health concern globally, including in Bangladesh. Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among women globally, with over 2 million new cases each year. Cervical cancer, often linked to HPV infection, claims around 300,000 lives annually, mostly in low- and middle-income countries. In Bangladesh, breast cancer has seen a rising incidence, becoming the most common cancer among women, while cervical cancer remains a significant public health challenge due to limited screening and awareness programs. Improving early detection and access to treatment is crucial for reducing the burden in Bangladesh and globally.

In Bangladesh, approximately 12% of women in the country suffer from cervical cancer, while 13% are affected by breast cancer. Cervical cancer is particularly prevalent among women aged 15 to 44. Despite the common belief that eliminating cancer entirely is impossible, 70% of cases of breast and cervical cancer can be completely prevented if individuals are informed and screened promptly when the disease is still in its early stages.

The government of Bangladesh has undertaken various initiatives to increase public awareness and screening in every upazila. In addition, Alo-BT is trying to conduct their activities in hard-to-reach areas. With his fifty years of research and experience, Prof. Dr. Golam Abu Zakaria launched Alo-BT in 2019 to carry out preventive measures enthusiastically and provide qualified workforce for cancer treatment.

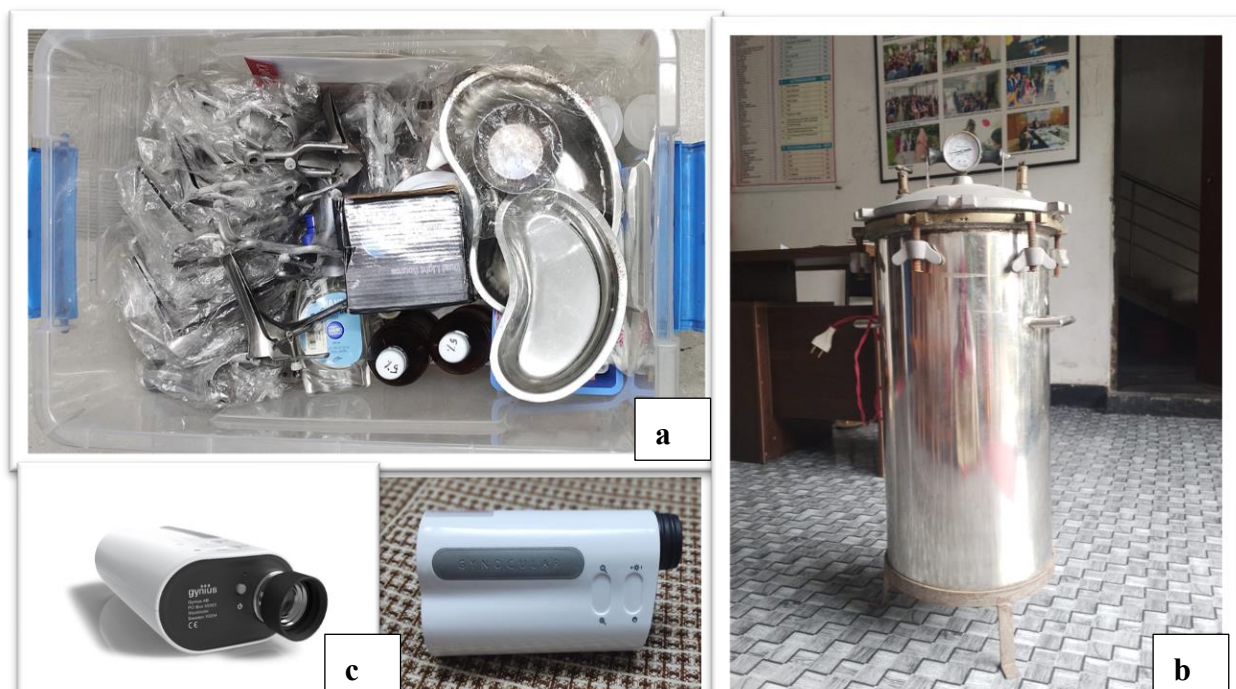


Figure 1: Equipment for Cervical Cancer Screening (VIA Test)- a) Speculum, Gali pot, Kidney tray, Pair of gloves, Cotton swabs, Cotton-tipped buds, Gauze, Ring forceps, Acetic acid or Vinegar; b) Autoclave Machine, c) Colposcope.

In light of this, at this moment Alo-BT is equipped with adequate facilities for VIA (Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid) test and colposcopy (Figure 1). This makes it possible for women to get tested for VIA at any time and place, guaranteeing ongoing efforts to encourage early identification and prevent cervical cancer. Furthermore, Alo-BT keeps in close contact with a number of cancer hospitals, referring and caring for individuals when their VIA is positive.

Cancer Training

Extensive Health Program in Collaboration of International Expert

Alo-BT is focusing on increasing awareness in the health sector regarding the prevention and early detection of cervical and breast cancer, as well as aligning with the SDG goal-3 and WHO's goal strategy for 2030. Alo-BT also offers important screening services to women living in both rural and urban areas of Bangladesh. Collaborating with experts in the field ensures that participants receive high-quality training that meets international standards. Alo-BT, believe that collaboration is key to making meaningful progress in women's health and completed In-Service Training program in 26 November- 21 December, 2023.

For early stage of cancer diagnosis especially cervical and breast screening training program is important. The main aim of the In-Service Training program is to make them skill personals as well as transfer knowledge. This year the trainer was Dr. med. Dr. rer. nat. Dr. Brigitte Schuhmann, Former Senior Gynaecologist and obstetrician, PhD (Medicine, Mathematics), SES Expert, Germany. She had approximately 40 years' experience of serving Kantonsspital Baselland (hospital), Liestal (Switzerland). St. Elisabethenkrankenhaus (hospital), Lörrach (Germany). St. Benedicts Hospital, Tanzania (Africa) and many other rural areas. She is also Professional Trainer for USG, expert in Sonography (especially fetal defects in diagnosis).

The program was designed to provide comprehensive training to healthcare professionals in Bangladesh, empowering them with the skills and knowledge needed to conduct effective cervical cancer screenings and perform ultrasonograms. In various organizations, training facilities, and public hospitals, the training program (Figure 2) covered ultrasound, cancer screening (VIA), colposcopy, and awareness campaigns as follows:

Organizations-

Rahima Baniz Healthcare Centre (RBHC, A project of Alo-BT), Naogaon
Bakhtunnessa Chowdhury Diabetes Centre (BCDC), Sylhet, Kulaura
Begum Rokeya Nari O Shishu Shasthya Unnayan Sangstha (BERNOSSUS), Dhaka
Bangladesh Cancer Society (BCS), Dhaka
Rotary Club of Dhaka Dhruva Tara, Dhaka

Training Institutes (USG)-

Shristy Institute for Health Sciences & Technology, Dhaka
Center for Medical Ultrasound & Doppler (CMUD) Pvt. Ltd., Dhaka
Pacemaker Royal Medical Academy Ltd., Dhaka

Public Hospitals (with Save Life Foundation through DGHS)-

Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH)
Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College, Gazipur
Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, Mymensingh



Figure 2: Training Activities- a) Patient Consultation at RBHC with the cooperation of RBHC doctor, b) Instructions for VIA at Bangladesh Cancer Society, c) Providing VIA training at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMC), d) Ultrasonogram Training at Sristy Foundation, e) Awareness Program with Rotary Club of Dhaka Dhruva Tara, f) Providing VIA training at Tajuddin Medical College and Hospital (TMCH).

Alo-BT is devoted to elevating the quality of healthcare by partnering with renowned experts in various fields. Through these collaborations, the organization ensures that participants receive top-notch training, aligned with international standards and best practices. By focusing on capacity-building and skill enhancement, Alo-BT empowers healthcare professionals to better serve their communities.

Preventive Activities (Awareness and Screening)

Screening Program on Cervical Cancer and Awareness

Since the founding, Alo-BT engages in preventive activities focused on raising awareness about health issues, including cancer and infectious diseases. The organization conducts community outreach programs, promoting regular screenings and healthy lifestyle choices to prevent diseases. Through education and advocacy, Alo-BT strives to reduce the health risks faced by vulnerable populations. To keep people free from cancer, Alo-BT has organized a cancer awareness and screening program (Figure 3) at Councilor Office of Ward No. 3, Mirpur 10 on March 15 and 17, 2024. Councilor of that ward gave full support to complete the said program properly. In addition, our co-organizers are Dhaka’s Rotary Club of Dhruva Tara and Inner Wheel Club Dhaka Northeast.

In these two days 100 women were screened. Three women were diagnosed positive via test, gone examined by colposcopy by colposcopist (doctor). In parallel Alo -BT is performing in the urban area, which will help us for a clear picture of the status of cervical cancer in these areas. On behalf of Alo-BT, Prof. Dr. Hasin Anupama Azhari, and Dr. Shahiduzzaman and Dr. Farzana Islam, on behalf of Dhaka Rotary Club of Dhruva Tara. Aneela Majeed, and on behalf of Inner Wheel Club Dhaka Northeast Club, Suchitra Sen Kundu were present.

The renowned doctors and nurse were executed the screening program, Prof. Dr. Latifa Shamsuddin former head of department, Gynecologist BSMMU, and former president OGSB, Dr. Murshid Jahan Binte Ali, Gynecologist, BSMMU, Dr. Samina Sultana, Gynecologic Oncology Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and Mitali Khatun, Senior Staff Nurse. Registration of the women done by the volunteers Bushra Jannat, Shakil Ahmed, Swapnil Biswas, students of Computer Science and Engineering Department of United International University.



Figure 3: Screening Program on Cervical Cancer and Awareness.