



## Letter to the Editor

## Psychological autopsy study in Bangladesh: An unmet need to formulate preventive strategy of suicide



Suicide is a global public health problem which is the outcome of complex interaction of numerous factors viz genetics, individual psychology, surrounding social factors, and enduring cultural issues (Arafat, 2018; Arafat et al., 2018). What stipulates a person to take own life is still unanswered in specific fashion, which acts as prime obstacle in suicide research (Cavanagh et al., 2003). However, psychological autopsy studies (PAS) have been considered as the most valuable, systematic as well as straight research tool to determine the relation of any specific risk factor and suicide by tracing psychological and contextual issues before death from the proxy respondents (Cavanagh et al., 2003; Conner et al., 2011; Isometsä, 2001). In suicidology, it has been postulated that at least 90% of those who kill themselves by suicide suffer from at least 1 psychiatric disorder which has been revealed by repeated PAS (Hjelmeland et al., 2012; Milner et al., 2012; Cavanagh et al., 2003).

Bangladesh is a developing country in south Asia with high density of population and dearth of research in suicide (Arafat et al., 2018; Arafat, 2019). As far as it has been studied, repeated researches revealed a quite different sociodemography and risk factors of suicide in Bangladesh (Arafat et al., 2018; Arafat, 2018; Chen et al., 2012). A significant portion of suicides happen here as a result of mundane emotionally charged events; females are dying more than males; and early adulthood (20–30 years) is the most risky time of life in Bangladesh context which is quite different from developed countries (Arafat, 2019; Tandon and Nathani, 2018; Arafat et al., 2018). Moreover, mental disorders as risk factor of suicide have been poorly studied in the country (Arafat et al., 2018). Countries those conducted PAS found psychiatric disorders as important risk factors of suicide and preventive strategies have been considered based on the findings of PAS. Hence, nationwide representative psychological autopsy is an immediate and unmet need in Bangladesh to determine the psychiatric disorders as an important risk factor of suicide. The findings of psychological autopsy in Bangladesh could be different from the existing picture of developed world.

As a global public health problem, World Health Organization called on its members to develop and implement national suicide prevention strategy which has been grossly under attained among the developing nations and Bangladesh is not an exception (Khan, 2005; Arafat et al., 2018). Recent studies have been coming out on suicide in

Bangladesh, however nationwide studies focusing risk factors of suicide are yet to be started (Arafat et al., 2018). Without adequate determination of local and cultural risk factors of suicide, formulation of national suicide prevention strategy may be foolish. As documented from previous studies, psychiatric disorders play significant role in overall suicide rate and proper management of mental illness is an important prevention strategy (Zalsman et al., 2016). This significant data has been generated from PAS across multiple cultures, countries and times. Therefore, for the sake of formulation of successful national suicide prevention strategy, PAS is certainly an unmet need in Bangladesh. Author thrusted on drawing attention of local as well as global scientific community, policy makers, researchers, funders, academicians and other stakeholders to have concerns regarding PAS in Bangladesh which would reveal mental aspects of suicide as well as could be the baseline data for ascertaining the appropriate suicide prevention strategy in Bangladesh.

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### Conflict of interest

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