

**Motivation**

The Public Services, Development Research group worked to assess and improve the quality of services for poor people. This study is part of that larger effort.

**Objectives**

The goal was to quantify the extent of the absenteeism problem in Bangladesh on a nationally representative scale.

**Absenteeism**

For the whole sample of providers, the absentee rate is 35%. Rates of absenteeism are quite large as expected from common, public perceptions of health services in Bangladesh.

Nationwide the average number of vacancies over all types of providers in rural health centers is 26 percent. Regionally, vacancy rates (unfilled posts) are generally higher in the poorer parts of the country.

- When separated into level of facility, the absentee rate for doctors at the larger clinics is 40% but at the smaller sub-centers with a single doctor, the rate is 74%.

**Determinants of staff absence:**

- Living in the same town or village as the health facility.
- Access to a road strongly determines the absentee rates of providers. It directly reduces the absentee rate, particularly for half-day absences.

**Sample**

180 health facilities

**Sample design**

Bangladesh is divided into six divisions, 64 districts (*Zilas*), and 507 sub-districts (*Thanas* or *Upazilas*).

They first stratified Upazilas into two categories: Upazilas which are exclusively covered under the Government health system; Upazilas in which a portion of the areas are served by some type of NGO provider. 30 Upazilas from each of the two strata were selected at random. From each selected Upazila, we randomly selected one Union Health and Family Welfare Center. Since not every Upazila has an upgraded-UHFWC, we selected 15 upgraded-UHFWC from each of the two strata, one with & the without NGO coverage.

**Resources monitored**

Absenteeism, key characteristics of health workers and facilities

**Contact**

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**Main report**

Chaudhury, Nazmul and Hammer, Jeffrey S. (2003) "Ghost Doctors Absenteeism in Bangladeshi Health Facilities," Policy Research Working Paper No. 3065, May.