

FEATURED STORY

Strengthening Cardiac Rehabilitation Together

ACROSS is an international research partnership bringing together leading institutions across Bangladesh, Pakistan and UK and beyond to improve access to affordable, evidence-based cardiac rehabilitation for people living with cardiovascular disease and multimorbidity, including a mental health condition. Through collaborative research, capacity strengthening, and co-design with patients, healthcare professionals and communities, the programme is developing culturally appropriate and sustainable rehabilitation models that can improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities across diverse healthcare settings.



Message from Principal Investigator (UK)

**Professor
Rod Taylor**



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the ACROSS Newsletter. Following our successful kick-off meeting in Doha earlier this year and the official launch of ACROSS, I am delighted to introduce the first issue of our quarterly newsletter. It is designed to keep our partners and stakeholders connected by sharing key milestones, research progress, capacity-building activities, and collaborative achievements from across the programme.

ACROSS is built on strong international partnerships and a shared commitment to improving access to affordable, evidence-based cardiac rehabilitation for people living with multimorbidities. Together, we are generating knowledge, strengthening research capacity, and developing sustainable solutions that can improve health outcomes across diverse settings.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration. I look forward to working with you as we advance the ACROSS vision and create lasting impact for communities worldwide.

Message from Principal Investigator (Pak)

**Professor
Imran Chaudhary**



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the ACROSS Newsletter.

This first issue marks an important milestone in our collective journey to improve access to affordable, high-quality cardiac rehabilitation in resource-constrained settings. Through collaboration, innovation, and equitable partnerships, ACROSS is developing culturally appropriate, evidence-based approaches to address the growing burden of cardiovascular disease and multimorbidity.

This newsletter celebrates the dedication and achievements of our research teams, partner institutions, healthcare professionals, and community members who are helping drive the programme forward. I extend my sincere thanks to all our partners, participants, and stakeholders for their continued commitment and support.

Together, we are building stronger research partnerships and creating sustainable solutions that will improve health outcomes and expand equitable access to cardiac rehabilitation across our partner countries.

ACROSS at a Glance



3

Core
Countries



5

Years of
Collaboration



6

Seminars
delivered



8

PhD
studentships



1

Communication
strategy, launched
on June 2026



1

Shared vision for
affordable CR in BD
and PK



Our Focus

Advancing affordable cardiac rehabilitation
across countries and communities





PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

1



9–12 Feb 2026 | ACROSS Kick-Off Meeting Launches Five-Year Collaboration

Partners from the UK, Pakistan and Bangladesh convened in Doha for the ACROSS Kick-Off Meeting. Over four productive days, the consortium aligned on programme objectives, discussed cultural adaptation, clinical trials, capacity strengthening and communications, and agreed a clear, shared roadmap to guide collaboration and delivery over the next four years.



2



30 March 2026 | Dr Shah's Visit Strengthens ACROSS Collaboration

Professor Dr Shahkar Ahmad Shah from the Peshawar Institute of Cardiology visited the University of Glasgow and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde. He toured clinical research facilities, met with university and health-service teams, and held productive discussions on clinical research, trials and mutual priorities. The visit culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, strengthening collaboration and supporting future ACROSS work.



3



April 2026 | Advancing Cardiac Rehabilitation Policy in Pakistan

Professor Syed Shahkar Ahmed Shah, President of the Pakistan Association of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgeons, issued a policy statement calling for comprehensive cardiac rehabilitation to become a mandatory component of care in hospitals providing cardiology and cardiac surgery services. Building on this advocacy, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission has made the provision of rehabilitation services mandatory for cardiac care hospitals across the province, an important step towards strengthening access to cardiac rehabilitation in Pakistan.



4



Jan–June 2026 | Developing the Next Generation of Global Health Researchers

ACROSS is investing in the next generation of global health researchers through fully funded PhD studentships. Two Pakistan-based PhD students have already joined the programme, with further opportunities being developed in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Through structured training, mentorship and joint supervision across South Asia and the UK, the programme will strengthen research capacity and build lasting international partnerships.



5



11 April 2026 | ACROSS Expertise Showcased at PakLive 2026

Professor Rod Taylor delivered the online presentation, "Access to Cardiac Rehabilitation in Pakistan: Time for Implementation," at PakLive 2026 in Lahore. The presentation highlighted key evidence, implementation considerations and opportunities to expand cardiac rehabilitation across Pakistan, demonstrating ACROSS's commitment to evidence-based practice and international collaboration. (<https://www.psic.org.pk/pakistan-live>)



6



June 2026 | ACROSS Communications Strategy Launched

The ACROSS Communications Strategy was launched to support effective collaboration, knowledge sharing and stakeholder engagement across the programme. It establishes clear goals and actions for timely, transparent and accessible communication, helping ACROSS reach researchers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, patients, communities and the wider public.



IN THIS ISSUE

✓ **Featured Story**
Strengthening Cardiac
Rehabilitation Together

✓ **ACROSS Seminar
Series**
Knowledge, Evidence,
Impact

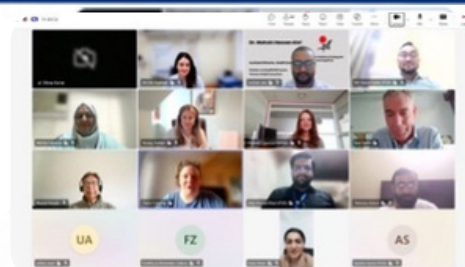
✓ **Pakistan
Roadshow**
Engaging, Communities,
Driving Change

✓ **Bangladesh
Updates**
Building Capacity,
Expanding Reach

✓ **Looking
Ahead**
What's Next for
ACROSS

ACROSS Monthly Hybrid Seminar Series

The ACROSS Monthly Hybrid Seminar Series brings together researchers, clinicians, practitioners and partner organisations to exchange knowledge on cardiac rehabilitation, multimorbidity and implementation challenges. Through expert-led seminars and discussions, the series supports shared learning, research capacity development and wider dissemination of evidence-informed solutions across the UK, Pakistan and Bangladesh.




Psychosocial Issues in Cardiac Patients

THURSDAY, 30 APRIL, 2026
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM



Professor David L Hare
DAVID HARE, DPH, FRACP, FRANZCP, FRCGS, FRCG, FRSC

Prof David is a clinical cardiologist and cardiovascular research leader with global academic experience

REGISTER NOW

- Register via link or QR code
<https://tinyurl.com/4brv33sk>
- Confirmed participants will receive calendar invite with event details




Assessment of Bangla Heart Manual in Patients with Coronary Heart Disease & their Caregivers in Bangladesh: A feasibility study

THURSDAY, 21 MAY, 2026
13:00 - 14:00 UK TIME



Dr. Md. Jamal Uddin (PhD)
Dr. Jamal completed his PhD at University of Glasgow and serves as Country Project Manager for the ACROSS-BD project. He is also Co-lead for Capacity Building (WP4) within ACROSS Global Research.

PARTICIPANTS WILL LEARN

- The research methods used and their importance
- How data were collected, analysed, & interpreted
- Key recommendations & practical implications for future research & practice

REGISTER NOW

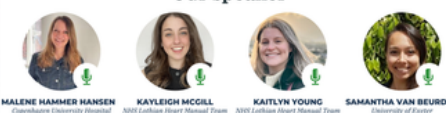
- Register via link or QR code
<https://tinyurl.com/msewskdn>
- Confirmed participants will receive calendar invite with event details




Digital Cardiac Rehabilitation Interventions

Understanding and exploring the digital approaches to cardiac rehabilitation from remote delivery models to patient-centred innovation in heart health recovery.

Our speaker



ABOUT ACROSS

Across is a new global research programme that has been established to increase the capacity of health services in Bangladesh and Pakistan to deliver scalable, clinically effective, and affordable rehabilitation programmes for people living with heart disease and a mental health difficulty. This research was funded by the NIHR (NIHR205540) using UK international development funding from the UK Government to support global health research. ACROSS (Affordable Cardiac Rehabilitation: An Outreach Interdisciplinary Strategic Study) is a 5-year collaboration led by the University of Glasgow in partnership with a range of universities and healthcare organisations in the UK, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

This Seminar will be co-chair by



PROFESSOR ROD TAYLOR
University of Glasgow

BILAL AHMAD KHAN
PhD Scholar in ACROSS Project

UNITED-KINGDOM TIME	PAKISTAN TIME	BANGLADESH TIME
09:00 - 10:30	12:00 - 14:30	14:00 - 15:30

PLEASE REGISTER YOURSELF BY CLICKING THE LINK OR SCAN QR CODE:
<https://forms.office.com/e/aFWyZYE4>



1 30 April 2026 | Psychological Issues in Cardiac Patients

Speaker: Professor David L.Hare

This seminar explores how psychosocial stress, depression and anxiety affect cardiac patients and rehabilitation outcomes. It highlights the importance of holistic, patient-centred care and practical strategies to support mental well-being alongside physical recovery.

2 21 May 2026 | Assessment of Bangla Heart Manual in Patients with Coronary Heart Disease & their Caregivers in Bangladesh: A Feasibility Study

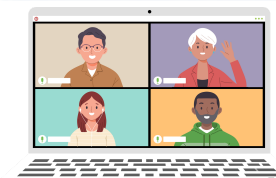
Speaker: Dr Md. Jamal Uddin (PhD)

This seminar presents findings from a feasibility study of the Bangla Heart Manual, covering research methods, data collection, key findings and practical implications. It offers useful insights for researchers and practitioners seeking to improve cardiac care and support caregivers in Bangladesh.

3 30 June 2026 | Digital Cardiac Rehabilitation Interventions

Speakers: Malene Hammer Hansen, Kayleigh McGill, Kaitlyn Young, Samantha van Beurden
Co-chairs: Professor Rod Taylor, Bilal Ahmed Khan

This seminar highlights innovative digital and remote cardiac rehabilitation models, exploring their impact, patient-centred approaches and strategies to improve accessibility, engagement and affordability for diverse populations.



Pakistan Spotlight

Jan-June 2026 | Heart Beat of Pakistan
Roadshow Reaches Communities Nationwide



From January to June 2026, the nationwide Heart Beat of Pakistan Roadshow under ACROSS took life-saving knowledge directly to communities across urban centres, rural villages and remote areas. Through interactive sessions, we raised awareness about cardiovascular health, prevention and cardiac rehabilitation, linked heart health with mental well-being, and empowered families, teachers, nurses, students and community members to take action for healthier lives.



Thousands
engaged



Communities
mobilised



Hears
empowered



Lives
strengthened

HEART BEAT OF PAKISTAN ROADSHOW 2026

HEADLINE NUMBERS

10

ROADSHOW SESSIONS
featured in the impact report

8

CITIES REACHED
across Pakistan

273+

PARTICIPANTS
explicitly reported across
sessions

1

NATIONWIDE INITIATIVE
linking heart and mental
health

Based on activities documented in the Heart Beat of Pakistan Roadshow Impact Report 2026.

ROADSHOW THEMES



Prevention

Promoting awareness
and early action to
reduce cardiac risk.



Lifestyle Change

Encouraging healthy
eating, physical
activity and stress
management.



Mental Well-being

Highlighting the vital
connection between
heart health and
mental well-being.



Community Engagement

Building supportive
networks and
empowering local
champions.



Frontline Capacity Building

Strengthening the
skills of healthcare
workers and educators
on the front line.



National Footprint

The Heart Beat of Pakistan Roadshow connected communities across the country, reaching major cities including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Hyderabad, Multan, Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar.



Informed communities are empowered communities





Pakistan Community Stories

Highlights from ACROSS Pakistan Roadshow activities across schools, institutes, and hospitals.



30 January 2026

Healthy Teachers, Healthier Communities

An awareness session at HM Khuwaja Government GP 2 High School in Shaheed Benazirabad focused on cardiac rehabilitation, stress management, lifestyle modification and mental well-being. Teachers discussed work-related stress and recognised the value of integrating mental health with heart health education.

 Audience: Teachers



Jan-June 2026

Strengthening Cardiac Care Through Nursing Education

A session at Sir C.J. Institute of Psychiatry in Hyderabad engaged 33 nursing staff. Pre- and post-session assessments showed improved understanding of cardiovascular health and mental well-being, and participants requested further awareness and capacity-building sessions.

 Audience: Nursing Staff



Jan-June 2026

Bridging Hearts and Minds in Rawalpindi

An awareness session at the Institute of Psychiatry in Rawalpindi brought together nursing professionals from Benazir Bhutto Hospital and students from Shifa College of Nursing. Twenty participants discussed early signs of cardiac conditions, psychosocial risk factors and the importance of holistic care.

 Audience: Nursing Professionals & Students



Mental health and cardiac health must be addressed together



Pakistan Community & Health System Engagement

Jan-June 2026 | More roadshow stories from communities, hospitals and educational settings.



Jan-June 2026 |

Empowering Communities to Advance Cardiac Health

At Hamdard Foundation, an interactive session engaged around 80 participants in discussions on cardiovascular disease, risk factors, lifestyle change and mental well-being. The event encouraged practical action and demonstrated how community dialogue can strengthen prevention and awareness.



Jan-June 2026 |

Where Hearts and Mind Meets

A community awareness session in Islamabad linked heart health with mental well-being and highlighted the importance of lifestyle change, early detection and supportive local networks. Residents explored how informed choices can reduce cardiovascular risk.



Jan-June 2026 |

Every Heart Has a Story in Lyari

At Lyari Community Centre, around 40 participants joined a discussion on cardiovascular disease prevention, psychosocial stress and the importance of community support. The session showed how lived experience can shape both heart health and mental well-being.



Jan-June 2026 |

Where Care Meets Cardiology

At the School of Nursing, Dow University of Health Sciences in Karachi, 75 nurses took part in an awareness session on heart and mental health. The session strengthened understanding of early detection, prevention and the important role of nurses in supporting both physical and psychological aspects of patient care.



Jan-June 2026 |

From Operation Theatre to Outpatient care

At Heart and General Hospital in Quetta, a multidisciplinary audience of health workers, students and patient attendants explored cardiovascular risk, rehabilitation and mental well-being. The session highlighted practical prevention messages relevant to both healthcare professionals and communities.



Jan-June 2026 |

Investing in Prevention

At Raheem Medical Centre and General Hospital in Peshawar, nurses, allied health professionals, students and community visitors took part in a session focused on prevention, healthy lifestyles and the shared responsibility of building heart-healthy communities.



Across Pakistan, **ACROSS** and **PILL** are taking evidence, awareness and prevention messages directly to people and places that matter.



Bangladesh Updates

From January to June 2026, the ACROSS-BD programme made substantial progress towards establishing evidence-based cardiac rehabilitation in Bangladesh. Key achievements included participation in the ACROSS Kick-Off Meeting, delivery of knowledge-exchange seminars, coordination with three partner hospitals to prepare for the feasibility pilot trial and subsequent randomised controlled trial, completion of two focus group discussions with cardiac patients and caregivers, and qualitative research training for the Bangladesh team. Together, these activities strengthened collaboration, generated valuable patient-centred insights and established a strong foundation for adapting and implementing cardiac rehabilitation services in Bangladesh.

AT A GLANCE

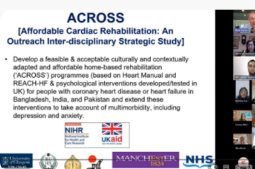
- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| 
1
Kick-Off Meeting (virtual participation) | 
2
Seminar Presentations | 
3
Partner Hospitals Coordinated | 
2
Focus Group Discussions | 
1
Qualitative Research Training Workshop |
|---|--|--|--|---|

1 9–12 February 2026 | ACROSS Kick-Off Meeting in Doha, Qatar



The ACROSS Kick-Off Meeting brought together partners from the UK, Pakistan and Bangladesh to officially launch the programme and strengthen international collaboration. Although the Bangladesh team could not attend in person, the ACROSS-BD team, led by Bangladesh University of Health Sciences, actively participated in all four days through virtual sessions. Team members contributed to discussions on programme objectives, implementation strategies and future plans, demonstrating their strong commitment to the successful delivery of ACROSS.

2 Knowledge Exchange Through Seminar Presentations



Two seminar presentations supported knowledge exchange on adapting evidence-based interventions for low- and middle-income countries. Md. Jamal Uddin presented the adaptation of the English Heart Manual into the Bangla Heart Manual and shared findings from a feasibility study involving patients with coronary heart disease and their caregivers. The presentations highlighted the adaptation process, implementation considerations and feasibility outcomes within the Bangladeshi context.

3 April 2026 | Partner Coordination Meetings to Ensure Trial Site Readiness



The ACROSS-BD core team met with focal persons and clinical trial leads from three partner hospitals to prepare for the upcoming feasibility pilot trial. Discussions covered space allocation, equipment installation, staffing, site readiness, implementation timelines, roles and responsibilities. The team also reviewed the proposed strategy for the subsequent randomised controlled trial. These meetings strengthened coordination, clarified responsibilities and helped ensure that all participating sites were prepared for successful trial delivery.

4 17 and 19 May 2026 | Focus Group Discussions with Patients and Caregivers



Two focus group discussions were held with cardiac patients and caregivers at Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital & Research Institute and the University Cardiac Centre, Bangladesh Medical University. Participants included people recovering from myocardial infarction and coronary artery bypass surgery, as well as those living with heart failure. Discussions explored experiences of cardiac care, treatment adherence, lifestyle change, psychological distress and caregiver burden. The findings will inform the development of an accessible, acceptable and patient-centred home-based cardiac rehabilitation programme for Bangladesh.

5 May 2026 | Patient and Caregiver Representatives Shape the Research



Patient and caregiver representatives actively contributed to the focus group discussions by sharing their experiences, priorities and practical concerns. Their involvement helped ensure that the research remained grounded in the real needs and expectations of patients and families. These contributions strengthened the inclusive and patient-centred approach of ACROSS-BD and will help shape the design and delivery of home-based cardiac rehabilitation services.

6 13–14 June 2026 | Strengthening Qualitative Research Capacity



Members of the ACROSS-BD team participated in a two-day short course on Basic Qualitative Research Methodology, organised by the Centre for Professional Skills Development in Public Health at BRAC University. The course strengthened participants' knowledge and practical skills in qualitative study design, data collection, analysis and thematic analysis. This training will support the team in generating high-quality evidence and applying patient-centred research methods throughout the programme.

“Hearing the patients and caregivers helped us understand the real challenges they face every day. Their voices are essential for designing a programme that truly works for the communities.”

– ACROSS-BD Research Team

WHAT'S NEXT?

As we move into the second half of 2026, the ACROSS-BD team will continue working closely with our partners to finalise preparations for the feasibility pilot trial and plan for the subsequent RCT, while keeping patient-centred design and capacity strengthening at the heart of our work.



LOOKING AHEAD

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2026

As we move into the second half of 2026, ACROSS partners remain committed to delivering high-impact research and building sustainable cardiac rehabilitation services across South Asia



IMPLEMENTATION STUDY PROTOCOLS

Advancing pilot studies and intervention development in Bangladesh and Pakistan, with preparation for future clinical trials.



CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

Delivering training, workshops and PhD programmes to build research and clinical expertise across partner institutions



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Expanding awareness activities and co-design initiatives with patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals.



DATA COLLECTION & EVALUATION

Strengthening data systems and evaluation frameworks to measure impact and inform future scale-up



POLICY & ADVOCACY

Engaging with policymakers to promote equitable access to evidence-based cardiac rehabilitation across the region.



STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP

Deepening collaboration across institutions and exploring new opportunities for joint research and innovation

Our Partners



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ACROSS partner teams in the UK, Pakistan and Bangladesh



Stay Connected

Keep up to date with the latest news, events, publications and opportunities from ACROSS.



ACROSS Website
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Award Ref: NIHR205540



THANK YOU

ACROSS is made possible by the dedication of our partners, researchers, healthcare professionals, patients, communities and supporters. Together, we are building a healthier future.