

# Factors Affecting the Overall Quality of Life (QoL) of the Salesmen of Kawran Bazar, Dhaka: A Randomized Survey.

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## Abstract

*Kawran Bazar is one of the largest wholesale marketplaces in Dhaka city, the capital of Bangladesh. It plays a crucial role in equilibrating supply with demand and facilitating price formation throughout the whole country. Though the salesmen of this market area are also a crucial factor for the day-to-day business, there is no significant study ever been conducted on their health or mental issues. The aim of this study is to determine various factors related to their work load, workplace, working environment affecting their physical and mental health i.e., overall quality of life. A sample of n = 150 subjects, were interviewed face to face with a questionnaire regarding their age, family status, income, workload, daily food habit, physical ailment, medication pattern, last visit to doctor, physical activity etc. The findings of this study revealed that most of the working people (34%) belonged to the age group 20-30 years. 66% of them are married and 60% are living with their families. Most of their (38%) monthly income lies within 5000-10000 Bangladeshi taka which is not sufficient to live a sound life in a capital city like Dhaka. 94% of salesmen work 12 hours a day and 6% work more than 12 hours. Everyone gets a holiday in a week which is Tuesday. The most frequently occurring health problem is respiratory problems (99%) i.e., sneezing, runny nose, common cold, cough and asthma. Besides 25.33% were suffering from gastritis and 19.33% of salesmen were suffering from back pain. 100% have to work for 12 hours or more daily without any overtime income which is a clear violation of International Labor Law. Most of salesmen of this market area are thriving for minimal living and their work load, health hazards, long working hour, mental stress and low pay all are imparting quite a negative impact on their both physical and mental health and overall Quality of Life (QoL).*

**Keywords:** Salesmen, Kawran Bazar, Quality of Life

## Introduction

The market-based economy of Bangladesh is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. According to research conducted by the US-based Pew Research Centre, Bangladesh is the most free-market, trade-oriented country in South Asia (Dhaka Tribune, 2014). According to the IMF, Bangladesh's economy is the second-fastest-growing major economy of 2016, with a rate of 7.1% (Bloomberg, 2016). Kawran Bazar is one of the largest wholesale marketplaces in Dhaka city, the capital of Bangladesh. It is also one of the largest marketplaces in South Asia (Banglapedia, Karwan Bazar). Kawran Bazar is a very important commercial hub of Dhaka city as it plays a crucial role in equilibrating supply with demand and facilitating price formation in every other markets of this city (Daily Star, 2003). It is the largest marketplaces in South Asia. As of 2002, the market had 1255 stores (Banglapedia, Karwan Bazar). The salesmen play a crucial role in any commercial or indus-

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trial sales. In the first place, a salesman is important not only to the distributor but also to the producer and consumer.

Health is a multidimensional concept of physical, mental, and social health and one of the important domains of overall quality of life (World Health Organization 1948). Quality of Life (QoL) simply can be defined as the well-being of individuals in a community. There are some simple indicators or measures of QoL i.e., health, air quality, water quality, food quality, standard of living, education, knowledge, happiness, safety, freedom from fear, community, freedom of speech, human rights, legal rights, privacy, public space, professional satisfaction, culture, physical activity, transportation etc. (John, 2016).

Workplace health and safety (WHS) is important because it is not only a legal requirement, it is also critical to the long-term success of the business. According to recent estimates released by the International Labor Organization (ILO), each year 2.78 million workers die from occupational accidents and work-related diseases (of which 2.4 million are disease-related) and an additional 374 million workers suffer from non-fatal occupational accidents (Wadsworth and Walters, 2019). In some other studies it has been found that heavy workloads have strong association with poor health (Virtanen et al., 2012; Bauer et al., 2009), poor quality of life and low levels of wellbeing (Li et al., 2015; Safstrom and Hartig, 2013; Hsu et al., 2019).

As we all are well known of some of the facts of Kawran Bazar area that, it's an overcrowded, densely populated area with high sound and air pollution, inadequate sanitation and is very low maintained by the city corporation authority. In this study we tried to point out different factors associated with the work pattern and working environment of the salesmen of the Kawran Bazar and how these factors are causing mental and physical health hazards and affecting their overall Quality of Life (QoL).

## **Method and Materials**

### **Study Design and Data Collection**

This is a questionnaire-based, randomized study that was conducted among a total of 150 salesmen who worked at Kawran Bazar in Dhaka city. The duration of this study was 6 months. The period of this study was between July 2017 and December 2017. Information was collected in a predesigned questionnaire. Individual salesmen were interviewed face to face during the survey and the questionnaire forms were filled up by the surveyors. They were asked about their work load, income, family life, food habit, accommodation, leisure time, physical activity, health problems, knowledge and practice of medication etc. Before starting the study, verbal consent was obtained from each salesman.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study protocol was accepted by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Pharmacy, South-east University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The study was conducted according to the ethical standards established in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013).

### **Statistical Analysis**

Collected data were analyzed and presented by using Microsoft Excel 2010 (Roselle, IL, USA).

## Result

### Demographic Profile of the Salesmen

In this study, 100% (n=150) participants were male. It has been observed that the percentage of salesmen who were 20-30 years old was the highest (34%), while the percentage of salesmen in the age group of 40-50 was the lowest (11%). Furthermore, 66% of the salesmen were married while 34% were unmarried. 40% of salesmen had no children whereas, 22% and 21% of salesmen had one child and two children respectively. Most of the salesmen (60%) lived in with family and 46% of salesmen spent 5-10 hours with their family members. In addition, 28% of salesmen were non-smokers meanwhile, 73% of salesmen took homemade food. On the other hand, 38% of salesmen earned on an average 5000-10000 Bangladeshi taka (BDT) monthly and only 6% of salesmen earned over 30000 BDT monthly.

### Working Tenure of the Salesmen

It has been found that the maximum (31%) is working as a salesman for 1-5 years. 27% of salesmen are working for 10-20-years. Only 12% of salesmen are working for more than 20 years as salesmen.

### Daily Working Hours of Salesmen

Salesmen are commonly required to work long hours by their employers. It has been observed that 94% of salesmen work continuously for 12 hours and 6% of salesmen were working for more than 12 hours. According to International Labor Law, any worker or salesmen should not work for more than 8 hours. But here the shop owners made them working for more than 12 hours each and every day. This makes a huge negative impact on their life both physically and mentally.

### Weekly Holiday of Salesmen

To control traffic and electricity demand in Dhaka city markets have been divided into seven parts. Thereafter, the market holiday of each area has been declared on one day and Kawran Bazar remains closed on Tuesday. For this reason, all of the salesmen get a holiday that is Tuesday.

### Health Problems and Physical Discomforts

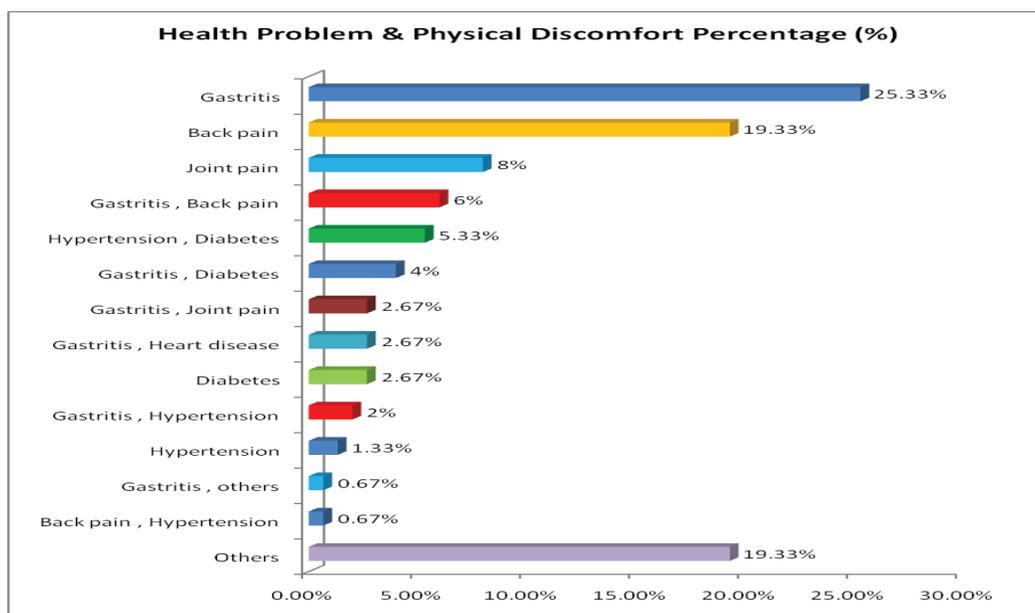


Figure1: Prevalence of health problems and physical ailment of the salesmen.

After respiratory problems (99%), it has been found that gastritis (25.33%) and back pain (19.33%) are the most prevalent health problems among the salesmen of Kawran Bazar. It's mainly due to their food habit and work pattern i.e., oily and spicy food intake, untimely meals, standing for a long time, heavy weight lifting, work stress etc. Other less prevalent health problems are joint pain (8%), diabetes (2.67%), hypertension (1.33%) etc.

### Types of Medicines Taken by the Salesmen

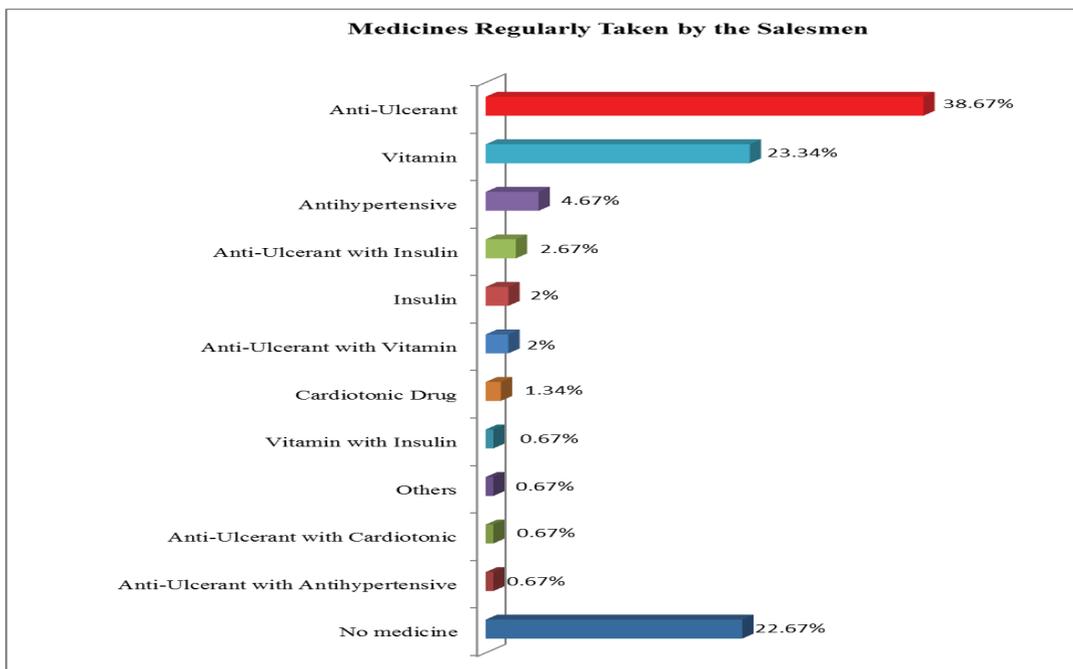


Figure 2: Medicines that are usually taken by the salesmen.

According to figure 2, it has been observed that anti-ulcerants (38.67%) and Vitamins (23.34%) are mostly used drugs among the salesmen. 4.67% of salesmen were taking antihypertensive drugs, whereas 22.67% of salesmen did not take any medicines at all. Besides, it has been observed that 84% of salesmen never used any kind of herbal medicine. Only 12% of salesmen had been the user of Ayurvedic medicine and 4% of Unani medicine.

### Regularity of Taking Medicine

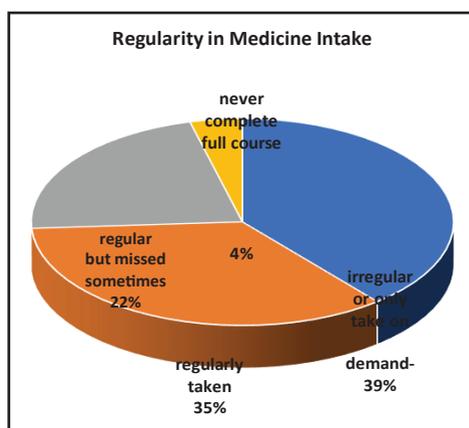
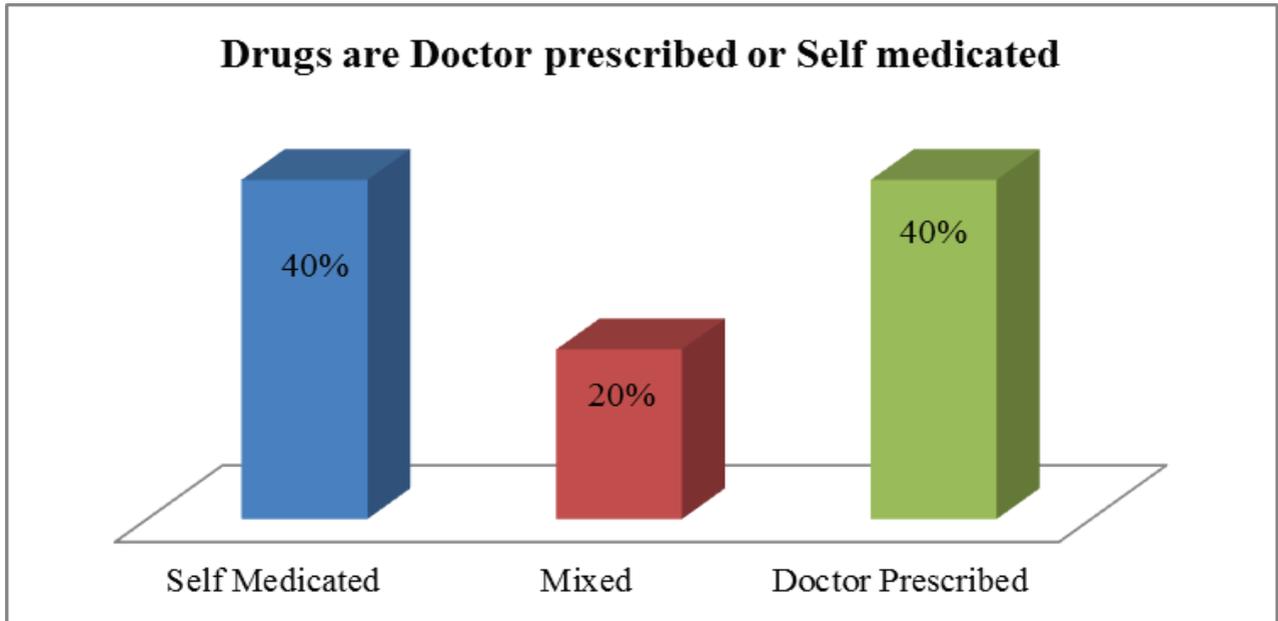


Figure 3: Status of regularity of medicine intake by the salesmen.

It has been found that only 35% (Figure 3) of salesmen were taking their medicine regularly in time. 39% are the irregular user of medicine.

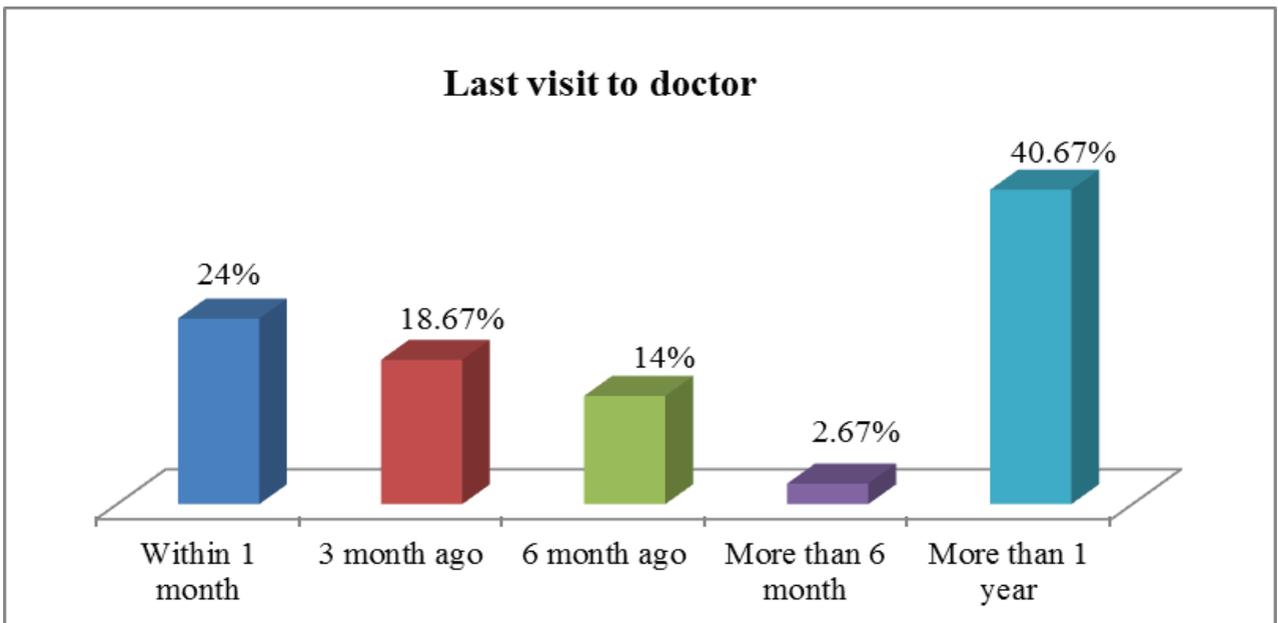
## Medication Pattern of the Salesmen



**Figure 4:** Status of medication pattern of the Salesmen

In this study, it is a matter of concern that 40% of salesmen are self-medicated. The habit of self-medication is an indication of drug abuse which should be strictly restricted.

## Propensity of Visiting the Doctor



**Figure 5:** Propensity of last visit to the doctor by the salesmen.

In this study, we have observed that 40.67% (Figure 5) of salesmen did not visit the doctor in more than 1 year. Despite their health problems, they find it hard to manage time to visit the doctor regularly. There is also a correlation between less doctor checkup and low monthly income (Nishi *et al.*, 2019).

## Incidence of Respiratory Problems

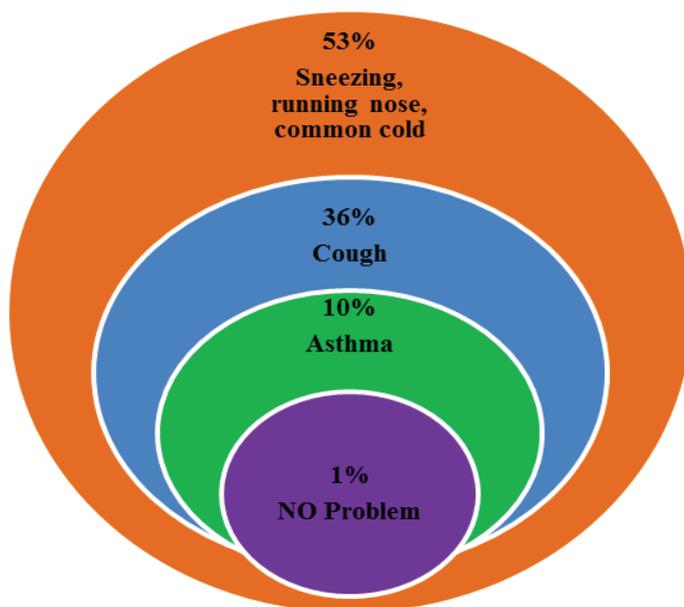


Figure 6: Respiratory disturbances that are encountered by the salesmen.

As Kawran Bazaar is a densely crowded area, the limit of air pollution is very high. That's why we asked this particular question to them whether they have any respiratory problems or not. Not surprising that we found, 99% of them have a respiratory problem in any form. The more their working period in this area, the more serious their respiratory condition. They have no remedy to the situation but some of them use a surgical mask or simple cloth mask to reduce the extent of pollution.

## Drugs used for Respiratory Problems

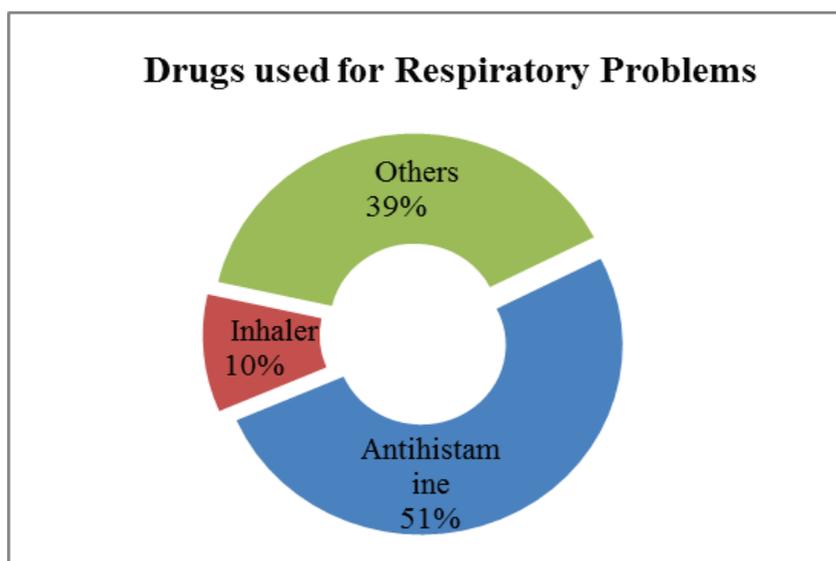


Figure 7: Drugs used for respiratory problems by the salesmen.

In this study, 99% of salesmen who were suffering from different respiratory problems were using mainly antihistamine type drugs (51%). 10% of salesmen suffering from asthma and all of them (10%) were using inhalers for their relief.

## Discussion

Different questions regarding their age, marital status, workload, physical ailment, medication habit, food habit, physical activity, last visit to doctor, family status, income, etc. to assess the negative impact of these factors on the physical and mental health i.e., overall QoL and well-being of the salesmen of Kawran Bazar Market area, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

In our study, 150 salesmen were participated and all (100%) were male . A large number of them (34%) belonged to the age group 20-30 years and 31% had 1-5 years of salesmanship tenure which was the indication of taking the responsibility of holding a business or earning process by the salesmen at an early age for survival. Furthermore, 66% of the salesmen were married and had one, two or three children.

Moreover, as a capital city, every commodity is quite expensive here i.e. accommodation, transport, food, treatment cost, etc. In this study, 19% of salesmen were found with very poor earnings of 3000-5000 BDT monthly; the majority (38%) people with poor earnings of 5000-10000 taka monthly, while only 6% people were found to earn more than 30000 taka per month. Therefore, taking responsibility of marital life with a very low income, in this capital city is quite difficult to maintain a standard life, in other words standard QoL.

Our next point to discuss is the effect of workload and working pattern on their physical and mental health condition. This study showed that 94% of salesmen work 12 hours a day and 6% work more than 12 hours. Everyone gets a day holiday in a week which is Tuesday. Several studies showed that long working hours decreases work-life balance, job satisfaction, performance and mental well-being of the individual (Li et al., 2015; Safstrom and Hartig 2013; Hsu et al., 2019). 46% of salesmen got 5-10 hours to spend time with family. Moreover, 31% of salesmen got less than 5 hours. From this, we can assume that the time what they got as free time was very insufficient and can make an impact on their social, mental and physical health (Goodman et al., 2017).

Because of this high work load inadequate rest, standing or sitting for a long period of time, heavy weight lifting or long working hours 19.33% of salesmen were suffering from back pain, additionally, 25.33% of salesmen were suffering from gastritis which may be due to not taking their food in right time. Despite their various physical illnesses, many of them (43%) are the irregular user of medicines. Such habit can be harmful for them in many ways like poor disease management (Nishi et al., 2019) drug tolerance, drug resistance, wrong medication, adverse drug effect etc.

As Kawran Bazaar is a densely crowded area, the limit of air pollution is very high. That's why we asked this particular question to them whether they have any respiratory problems or not. It's not surprising that we found, 99% of them have minimum one respiratory problem in any form i.e., sneezing, runny nose, common cold, cough or asthma.

Regarding taking medications, 38.67% of salesmen were taking anti-ulcerant capsule to treat gastritis, 23.34% of people were taking vitamin as regular medicine, and 51% & 10% were taking anti-histamine and inhalers respectively. In the case of taking regular medicine, we observed quite a good result that 35% of salesmen took their medicine regularly and 4% of salesmen didn't complete the course of medicine. 84% of salesmen don't take any herbal medicine and the other 12% of salesmen took ayurvedic and the other 4% took Unani medicine. But the most serious is that, 40% of salesmen took medicine by their own without consulting with the physicians. This type of self-medication can cause harmful effects by taking the wrong drug due to inadequate knowledge of

drug and drug management (Karimy et al., 2019).

From food habits, we observed that 73% of salesmen ate homemade food which was healthy and hygienic. 14% of salesmen ate from the tiffin suppliers and 13% of salesmen ate at hotels which are used to be very spicy, unhealthy and unhygienic and they may cause acidity, gastritis, ulcer, stomach aches, heartburn, diarrhea etc. (Lv et al., 2015; Ma et al., 2018).

## **Conclusion**

There is a proverb “Health is Wealth”, but in the case of this study, salesmen neither they have good health nor wealth. Most of them are thriving for a minimum living. Their occupational hazards, mental stress and low pay all are imparting a quite negative impact on their both physical and mental health i.e. overall Quality of Life. As there is no government guideline, policy or health education for them so we as an individual don’t have many things to do. Important measures and policy can be (and should be) taken by the Government or at least by the Dhaka City Corporation to improve their quality of life as they play a very significant role in our Dhaka city economy as well as the national economy. Mass media especially the newspaper, television can play an important role in raising attention towards this issue. Therefore, further study with large population size including the salesmen from other parts of the city or different parts of Bangladesh is needed to be conducted. It will give a clearer scenario of the measures and policy needed to be taken.

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## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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