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# NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ORAL REHYDRATION



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INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR  
DIARRHOEAL DISEASE  
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NATIONAL ORAL REHYDRATION  
PROGRAMME

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## THE ROLE OF MOTHERS IN AN ORAL REHYDRATION PROGRAMME

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An oral therapy field trial was conducted in the Matlab Field Station of ICDDR,B to compare the acceptability, effectiveness and safety of two types of oral fluids delivered through a Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning Programme. The trial sought to answer the following questions :

1. What type of delivery system can effectively implement oral therapy at the village level in rural Bangladesh ?
2. Can mothers, supported by a village-based Health Worker, accurately prepare and use oral fluid ?
3. Will people use oral fluids for the treatment of diarrhoea ?

Diarrhoea cases in one group of 40,000 were treated with WHO oral rehydration salts packets, the second group of 40,000 were treated with locally available *labon* and *gur* measured with a specially made plastic spoon. A third group of 40,000 who received only hospital-based diarrhoeal treatment at Matlab treatment centre served as controls. Eighty Family Welfare Visitors were trained to teach *bari* mothers in each area to treat diarrhoea cases. Routine analysis of solutions prepared by the mothers showed their ability to prepare the appropriate solutions. Two sources assessed therapy effectiveness: field assistants who interviewed the *bari* mothers every two months recorded that 80% of all diarrhoea cases received oral therapy; and FWV records of their fortnightly visits showed that over 95% of the cases received oral therapy. The study concludes that mothers with little or no education and with some supervision can be taught about diarrhoea and its management.