



SLMA ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Sri Lanka Medical Association



Sri Lanka Medical Association

Annual Report 2020



SLMA 2020 Vision

Professional Development for Quality Enhancement in Healthcare

Education, life-long learning and Continuous Professional Development

Enhancing the healthcare delivery through system improvement

Health promotion, lifestyle modification and disease prevention

Innovative Application of Technology for Healthcare

Collaboration and teamwork

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FOREWORD

Dear Members of the Sri Lanka Medical Association,

It was indeed a privilege to hold office as the 126th President of this hallowed institute. My pledge during the Presidential induction held on 18th January 2020 was to take SLMA to even greater heights of achievement and recognition. We had to take the most unexpected pathway when fulfilling that pledge.

The year 2020 was unprecedented. COVID-19 has inflicted an unexpected and unprecedented degree of damage and uncertainty on humanity. During such circumstances, the progress of any organization depends on its ability to incorporate new energies and new ideas to adapt to changing needs and demands. SLMA faced this challenge with vigor, with the combined strength of experience, youthful energy, enthusiasm and novelty that is extraordinary.

As the apex medical association in the country, SLMA has a responsibility to the medical profession and the general public to contribute in its maximum capacity in this fight against COVID-19. SLMA has been relentlessly working with the government authorities, other professional colleges and sectors towards fulfilling this responsibility.

SLMA has taken several initiatives to ensure our membership is updated with accurate and latest information on the global and local situation, prevention and management of COVID-19. The symposium “Novel Coronavirus Infection (nCoV), Wuhan China - Are we ready to face it?” held on Thursday, 30th January 2020, at Lionel Memorial Auditorium of the SLMA was only the start.

The 133rd Anniversary International Medical Congress of the SLMA has become history in making, held as a virtual on-line conference from 24th to 26th July 2020, and webcast worldwide from the historic Wijerama House in Colombo. The congress, previously known as annual sessions, returned to Wijerama House after 20 years. The Congress was aptly themed “Professional Development for Quality Enhancement of Healthcare: Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a complete conference conducted over three days in two parallel venues with all the regular components including the inauguration ceremony keynote address, six guest lectures, eight symposia, two plenaries and culminating with the Doctors’ Concert. For the first time in the history of SLMA, the Keynote Address was delivered online. The 133rd Anniversary International Virtual Medical Conference of the SLMA was a unique blend of tradition and technology in the era of new normal, combining the best of real-life and virtual.

The success of 133rd Anniversary International Medical Congress of the SLMA was an eye opener demonstrating the potential of technology in providing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in Sri Lanka. In line with one of the main themes of the SLMA’s vision for 2020, “Innovative Application of Technology for Healthcare”, we have taken initiatives to maximize the use of technology to reach out to our membership. All SLMA CPD events are now webcast live for the benefit of those who may not be able to attend in person.



SLMA Foundation sessions, held in hybrid format, were an unprecedented success, with over 700 participants joining online. E.M. Wijerama endowment lecture was held in the hybrid format for the first time in history. SLMA conducted several collaborative activities with international organizations. The first phase of an online CPD programme, conducted in collaboration with the World Bank and Ministry of Health was successfully concluded. Several community capacity projects were conducted in collaboration with the WHO.

There were several international conferences and webinars organized by SLMA during 2020. The APACPH 2020 conference themed “Public Health in the New Normal” was organized by SLMA in collaboration with Asia Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health (APACPH). The annual conference of Asia Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health (APACPH) was held from 5th to 9th December 2020. The main conference was held on 8th and 9th December at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo, Sri Lanka, with over 400 participants worldwide joining virtually.

With a catastrophic situation that meant financial crisis for many organizations, SLMA achieved a healthy financial status. This was a remarkable achievement considering that the year started with a negative balance in the general account. This was achieved through collaboration, attention to detail, minimizing wastage, commitment, sacrifices and hard work.

It was the year of digital revolution for SLMA. All conferences were conducted using state-of-the-art technology including virtual and augmented reality. Social media was used to the maximum effect to reach the membership. The number of followers for SLMA Facebook page increased from 9000 to 25000. SLMA YouTube channel achieved the landmark of 1000 subscribers and 50,000 views from just 68 subscribers and 1000 views. Over 400 high quality videos with educational content were added to the YouTube. SLMA online learning platform is now completely populated with content and ready to be launched.

In 2020, SLMA thrived and rose to the occasion, converting the crisis into a blessing in disguise. fulfilling national leadership roles and achieving international recognition. I thank the council, office bearers, past presidents, SLMA staff and all SLMA members for support during this very challenging year.

Professor Indika Karunathilake
President
Sri Lanka Medical Association.

21st December 2020

Council of the Sri Lanka Medical Association



Seated Left to Right: Dr Asela Olupeliyawa, Dr Sarath Gamini de Silva, Dr Lucian Jayasuriya, Prof Wilfred Perera, Dr BJC Perera, Dr Anula Wijesundere, Prof Indika Karunathilake, Dr Padma Gunaratne, Prof MC Weerasinghe, Prof Vajira Dissanayake, Dr Pramilla Senanayake, Dr Kalyani Guruge, Dr Sumithra Tissera

Standing Left to Right – 1st row: Dr Anuruddhika Rathnayake, Dr Nimani de Lanerolle, Dr Roshini Murugupillai, Dr Upeksha Samarakoon, Dr Chandan Athapaththu, Dr Eric De Zoysa, Dr Pandula Siribaddana, Dr Pamod Amarakoon, Dr Sankha Randeniya, Dr Surantha Perera, Dr Sajith Edirisinghe, Dr Sashika Sandaruwanie, Dr Thilina Wanigasakera, Dr Chiranthi K Liyanage, Prof Nirmala Wijekoon, Dr Udayangani Ramadasa

Standing Left to Right – 2nd row: Dr Kapila Jayaratne, Dr Achala Jayathilleke, Dr Niroshan Lokunarangoda, Dr. Murali Vallipurathan, Dr Inuka Kishara Gooneratne, Dr Clifford Perera, Dr Asitha Kosala Thannipularachchi

Absent: Prof RM Mudiyanse, Prof A Pathmeswaran, Prof Senaka Rajapakse, Dr Yasas Abeywickrama, Dr Samath D Dharmaratne, Dr Christo Fernando, Dr Ruwan Ferdinando, Prof. Saroj Jayasinghe, Dr B Kumarendran, Prof Kumara Mendis, Dr RM Sanath Rajakaruna, Dr Sunil Seneviratne Epa

1. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

The Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) was held on the 20th December 2019 at 7.00 p.m. at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium, Wijerama House, Colombo 07. Dr. Anula Wijesundere chaired the meeting. She thanked the members of the Council, members of the SLMA and the staff of the SLMA office for their contributions towards making the activities of the SLMA a success. He summarised the achievements and shortcomings during his period of presidency. The Honorary Secretary Dr. Kapila Jayaratne tabled the Annual Report 2019 and the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 21st December 2018. The minutes were unanimously confirmed by the membership present. Dr. Kapila Jayaratne thanked the president, the members of the council, members of the SLMA and the staff of the SLMA office for the support given during the year 2019.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

The following Office Bearers and Council Members were unanimously elected.

President	Prof. Indika Karunathilake
President Elect	Dr. Padma Gunaratne
Vice Presidents	Prof. M.C. Weerasinghe Prof. R. M. Mudiyanse
Secretary	Dr. Sumithra Tissera
Assistant Secretaries	Dr. Nimani De Lanarolle Dr. Sajith Edirisinghe Dr. Surantha Perera Dr. Pandula Siribaddana
Treasurer	Dr. Asela Olupeliyawa
Assistant Treasurer	Dr. Pamod Amarakoon
Public Relations Officer	Dr. Kalyani Guruge
Social Secretaries	Prof. Vajira H.W. Dissanayake Dr. Pramilla Senanayake
Past President Representative	Prof. Wilfred Perera
Co-editors, Ceylon Medical Journal	Prof. A. Pathmeswaran Prof. Senaka Rajapakse

ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dr. Chandana Atapattu, Dr. Sarath Gamini de Silva, Professor S.D. Dharmaratne, Dr. G. Eric Deepal De Zoysa, Dr. Christo Fernando, Dr. Ruwan Ferdinando, Dr. Inuka Kishara Gooneratne, Dr. W. M. A. U. Jayatilleke, Dr. Lucian Jayasuriya, Professor Saroj Jayasinghe, Dr. B. Kumarendran, Dr. Chiranthi K. Liyanage, Dr. Niroshan Lokunarangoda, Professor Kumara Mendis, Dr. Roshini Murugupillai, Dr. V. Murali, Dr. B.J.C. Perera, Dr. U.C.P. Perera, Dr. Sankha Randenikumara, Dr. Udayangani Ramadasa, Dr. Sanath Rajakaruna, Dr. S. B. Anuruddhika Rathnayake, Dr. Upeksha Samarakoon, Dr. Sashika Sandaruwani, Dr. Asitha Kosala Thanippu-liarachchi, Prof. C. Nirmala Wijekoon, Dr. Thilina Wanigasekera

EX-OFFICIO COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dr. Anula Wijesundere (Immediate Past President), Dr. Kapila Jayaratne (Outgoing Secretary), Dr. Yasas Abeywickrama (Outgoing Treasurer)

OTHER REPRESENTATIVES APOINTED TO THE COUNCIL

Dr. Sunil Seneviratne Epa (the nominee from the Ruhuna Clinical Society) was co-opted at the Council meeting held in January.

OFFICE BEARERS



President
Prof. Indika Karunathilake



President Elect
Dr. Padma Gunaratne



Vice President
Prof. M.C. Weerasinghe



Vice President
Prof. R. M. Mudiyanse



Secretary
Dr. Sumithra Tissera



Assistant Secretary
Dr. Nimani De Lanarolle



Assistant Secretary
Dr. Sajith Edirisinghe



Assistant Secretary
Dr. Surantha Perera



Assistant Secretary
Dr. Pandula Siribaddana



Treasurer
Dr. Asela Olupeliyawa



Assistant Treasurer
Dr. Pamod Amarakoon



Public Relations Officer
Dr. Kalyani Guruge



Social Secretary
Prof. Vajira H.W. Dissanayake



Social Secretary
Dr. Pramilla Senanayake



Past President Representative
Retired Professor
Wilfred Perera



Co-editor,
Ceylon Medical Journal
Professor A. Pathmeswaran



Co-editor,
Ceylon Medical Journal
Professor Senaka Rajapakse

COUNCIL MEMBERS



Council Member
Dr. Chandana Atapattu



Council Member
Dr. Sarath Gamini de Silva



Council Member
Professor S.D. Dharmaratne



Council Member
Dr. G. Eric Deepal De Zoysa



Council Member
Dr. Christo Fernando



Council Member
Dr. Ruwan Ferdinando



Council Member
Dr. Inuka Kishara Gooneratne



Council Member
Dr. W. M. A. U. Jayatilleke



Council Member
Dr. Lucian Jayasuriya



Council Member
Professor Saroj Jayasinghe



Council Member
Dr. B. Kumarendran



Council Member
Dr. Chiranthi K. Liyanage



Council Member
Dr. Nirosan Lokunarangoda



Council Member
Professor Kumara Mendis



Council Member
Dr. Roshini Murugupillai



Council Member
Dr. V. Murali



Council Member
Dr. B.J.C. Perera



Council Member
Dr. U.C.P. Perera



Council Member
Dr. Sankha Randenikumara



Council Member
Dr. Udayangani Ramadasa



Council Member
Dr. Sanath Rajakaruna



Council Member
Dr. S. B. Anuruddhika
Rathnayake



Council Member
Dr. Upeksha Samarakoon



Council Member
Dr. Sashika Sandaruwani



Council Member
Dr. Asitha Kosala
Thanippuliarachchi



Council Member
Prof. C. Nirmala Wijekoon



Council Member
Dr. Thilina Wanigasekera



Council Member
Dr. Sunil Seneviratne Epa

EX-OFFICIO COUNCIL MEMBERS



Immediate Past President
Dr. Anula Wijesundere



Outgoing Secretary
Dr. Kapila Jayaratne



Outgoing Treasurer
Dr. Yasas Abeywickrama



2. INDUCTION OF THE PRESIDENT

The induction ceremony of Prof. Indika Karunathilake, the President of Sri Lanka Medical Association for the year 2020 was held on 18th January 2020, at New Auditorium, Academic Centre, Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, Rodney Street, Colombo 08. The induction took place amidst a large and distinguished gathering exceeding 250 invitees.

The Presidential Address titled ‘Professional Development for Quality Enhancement in Healthcare’ generated much interest among those present. The priority task for the year 2020 to “Establish a system of continuous professional development for medical doctors” was highlighted with a series of activities planned ahead. The newly appointed president emphasised the need to look towards the future admixing the youthful energy, enthusiasm and novelty with indispensable wisdom and experience that comes with age, to make the ordinary extraordinary. Incorporating new energies and new ideas to adapt to changing needs and demands was underlined as a core responsibility for further progression of the organization. The address was given wide publicity by both the electronic and print media.

The ceremonial induction was followed by a reception and fellowship and dinner for all invitees at the same venue.

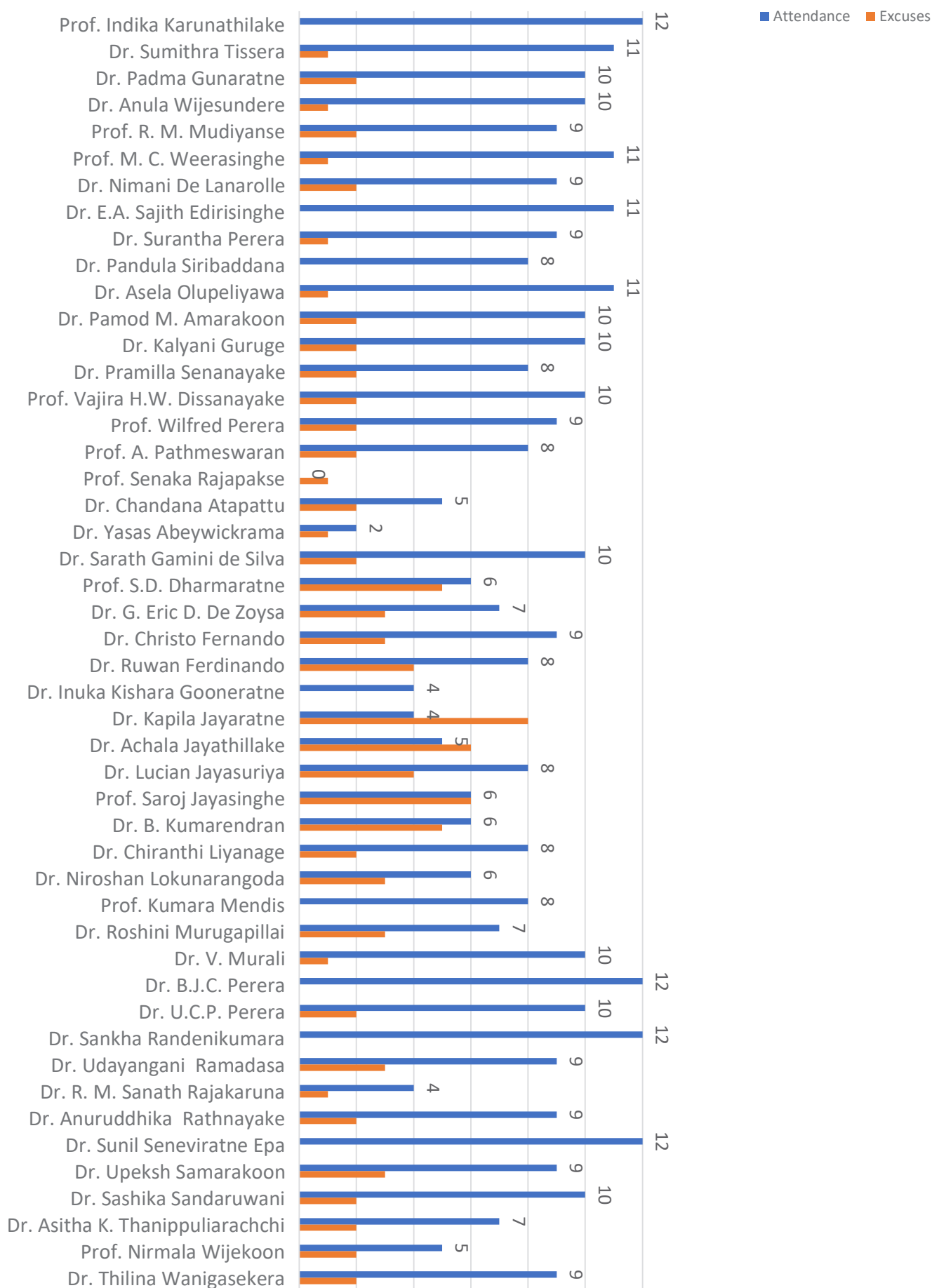


Dr. Anula Wijesundere inducting Prof. Indika Karunathilake as President SLMA 2020



3. COUNCIL MEETINGS

Fourteen Council meetings (12 Regular meetings) were held in 2020. The attendance of members at the regular Council meetings is given below:



4. 133RD ANNIVERSARY INTERNATIONAL VIRTUAL MEDICAL CONGRESS

The 133rd Anniversary International Virtual Medical Congress was held from 24th – 26th July 2020 at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium, “Wijerama House”, 6, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 7. The Inauguration ceremony was held on 24th July 2020 at 6.00 pm onwards. The theme of the Congress was “Professional Development for Quality Enhancement of Healthcare, beyond COVID-19 Pandemic”.

The main conference was preceded by eight Pre-congress sessions as mentioned below, which were held online with a good attendance.

1. The pre-congress workshop on Deans' Round Table "Future of Medical Education" was held on 12th June 2020.
2. The pre-congress workshop on "Microplastics in Sri Lanka & Human Health" was held on 10th July 2020.
3. "Making an Effective Scientific Presentation" was held on 16th July 2020.
4. "Recognition of medical degrees- beyond 2023" workshop was held on 17th July 2020.
5. "Clinical Genetics for Medical Practitioners" was held on 18th July 2020.
6. "One Health Approach" was held on 20th July 2020.
7. "Year of the Nurse & the Midwife: Health Workforce Development beyond COVID-19 Pandemic" was held on 22nd July 2020.
8. "Practical infection Prevention and Control Considerations in the Fight against COVID-19" were held on 23rd July 2020.

The Pre-congress workshops are available online at <https://www.youtube.com/user/SLMAonline>

Pre-Congress Workshops related to COVID-19

Pre-Congress Workshop – 1
Deans' Round Table "Future of Medical Education"

The full presentation is available at <https://youtu.be/D6pm0PmdxcY>

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Perspective Article

The New Normal of Medical Education - Challenges and Opportunities

Karunathilake, I.M.¹, Dissanayake, V.H.W.¹, Yasawardena, S.², Abegunawardena, A.³, Raviraj, S.⁴, Wijesinghe, P.S.⁵, Anthony, A.A.⁶, Wijesinghe, R.A.N.K.¹, Bowatte, S.⁸, Wickramaratne, N.⁵, Pathirana, K.D.¹⁰, Pilapitiya, S.¹¹, Edirisinghe, S.², Hettiarachchi, D.¹, Kohombange, C.¹² & Olupellyawa, A.¹

Introduction

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Medical Education worldwide has seen some remarkable changes. The digital transformation already seen in Medical Education has progressed rapidly and the profound effect of the current situation may have an everlasting impact on how future doctors are educated (Rose, 2020). Social distancing will be the new norm as it is the most effective preventive strategy pending an effective treatment or the development of a vaccine or both (Del Rio & Malani 2020). This is indeed a transformative juncture to learn and apply new methods and practices.

The advancement of Medical Education in this setting through curricular innovation is a seminal moment for many disciplines in medicine. These are challenging times for low to middle-income countries due to financial constraints coupled with a lack of human and infrastructural resources (Karunathilake, 2017). However, in this backdrop, Sri Lankan Medical Faculties have specially weathered the storm and have managed to continue the academic programmes while overcoming challenges posed by resource constraints. There are many lessons to be learned from universities spread across the island on how to successfully implement and transform Medical Education from one that is conventional to one that is more digitally enabled.

Journal article published based on the workshop

Newspaper Article on the
Medical Education in the “New Normal”

Pre-Congress Workshop – 6

Preventing the Next Pandemic: One Health Approach

This virtual Pre-Congress Workshop was organised by the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Veterinary Association (SLVA) on the 20th of July 2020. It was moderated by Professor Indika Karunathilake, President – SLMA, Dr. D.D.N. de Silva, President – SLVA, Professor Saroj Jayasinghe, Senior Professor and Chair of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo and Dr Tharanga Thoradeniya, Assistant Secretary – SLVA.

Several renowned local and foreign resource persons shared their experience, knowledge and ideas during this virtual workshop attended by over 75 participants. Among the speakers were Professor Malik Peiris, Chair Professor, Department of Microbiology, University of Hong Kong, Professor N.P. Sunil-Chandra, Senior Professor and Chair of Medical Microbiology, University of Kelaniya, Dr. B.M.A. Oswin Perera, Visiting Professor, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya, Dr. Ravi Bandara Dissanayake, Veterinary Epidemiologist, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Dr. Tikiri Priyantha Wijayathilaka, AMR Technical Officer – World Organization for Animal Health, Sub-Regional Representation for South East Asia, Thailand and Dr. Dilan Amila Satharasinghe, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya.

This workshop which was aimed at all medical professionals as well as the general public focused on control and prevention methods of contagious diseases including COVID-19. Bringing together experts from the fields of medicine and veterinary sciences to control epidemics such as COVID-19 was highlighted as many microbes infect both humans and animals and they share the ecosystems they live in. There was emphasis on the 'One Health' approach to establish multi-sectoral collaborations to accomplish better public health outcomes.

The full presentation is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_9u4oXClu4



Resource persons

Pre-Congress Workshop 7 – *International Year of the Nurse & the Midwife: Health Workforce Development beyond COVID-19 Pandemic*

This virtual pre-congress workshop, webcast on 22nd of July 2020, was jointly organized by the Family Health Bureau, the Education, Training and Research Unit, Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO), and SLMA. The target audience for this workshop were doctors, nurses, medical students and other allied healthcare workers. The speakers included Dr Anoma Jayatilaka, MO - Maternal and Reproductive Health, WHO/ SEARO, Dr Chitramalee de Silva, Director - Maternal and Child Health, Ministry of Health, Mrs. Asoka Abeynayake, Director / Nursing, Dr Sudath Samaraweera, Deputy Director General/ Education, Training and Research, and Ms. Chathuri Wimalanaga, Manager, Human Resources, Asiri Hospital Holdings PLC. The moderator was Dr. Sajith Edirisinghe, Assistant Secretary, SLMA.

The workshop created an ideal platform to share experiences on sustaining essential maternal and child health services during the COVID-19 outbreak in Sri Lanka and worldwide. The importance of capacity development among health workers with a special focus on nurses and midwives to commemorate the 'International year of Nurses and Midwives' was also highlighted during the session.

For the full presentation, please log on to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjFecwZDLxc>



Resource persons



Moderators

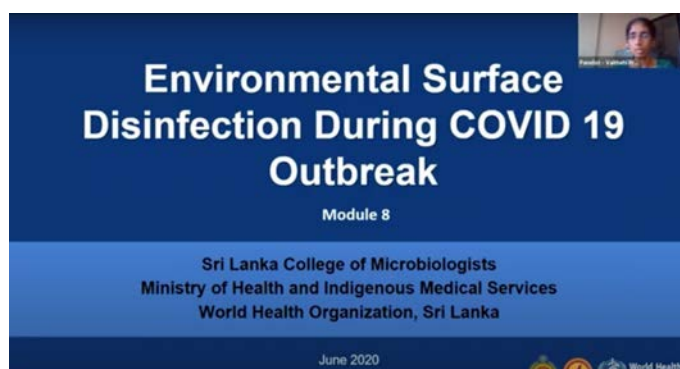
Pre-Congress Workshop – 8

Practical infection Prevention and Control Considerations in the Fight against COVID-19

A virtual pre-congress workshop on "Practical infection Prevention and Control Considerations in the Fight against COVID-19" was jointly organised by the Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists, the Directorate of Healthcare Quality and Safety of the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization in collaboration with the SLMA and webcast on 23rd of July 2020. The on-line participants included doctors, nurses, medical undergraduates and nursing students.

The resource persons were April Baller, WHO Health Emergencies, Geneva, Switzerland, Dr. Madhumanee Abeywardena, Consultant Microbiologist, Dr. Vaithehi Rajeevan Francis, Consultant Microbiologist and Dr. Sudath Dharmaratne, Director, Directorate of Healthcare Quality and Safety and WHO Country office. The session was moderated by Dr. Shirani Chandrasiri, President, Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists and Professor Indika Karunathilake, President, SLMA. Timely topics such as COVID-19 infection among healthcare workers, rational use of personal protective equipment, environmental and surface disinfection and training of healthcare workers were discussed during the programme.

For the full presentation, please log on to <https://youtu.be/ZHf68vVPRNA>



Main Congress

The Congress returned to the Wijerama house after a period of 15 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic which brought many changes to the normal procedures and processes. Under the able guidance of the President of the SLMA, the many challenges brought on by the pandemic were overcome and a phenomenally successful “International virtual congress” was held.

The Congress commenced with the Inauguration Ceremony which was held on the 24th of July, 2020. Onsite participation was limited to the Council of the SLMA and a few invitees. It was webcast live and watched by over 500 participants online. The gathering was addressed by the guests of honor Major General Dr. Sanjeewa Munasinghe, Secretary Ministry of Health and Dr. Dujeepa Samarasinghe, Chair, Faculty Teaching Excellence Committee, School of Medicine, National University of Singapore, who joined via an online platform from Singapore. Launching of the SLMA CPD portal and the Health Educational Material was followed by the delivery of the SLMA oration by Professor Sachith Mettananda.

The annual congress which spanned over the next two days consisted of eight (8) pre congress seminars, the keynote address, three (3) orations, two (02) plenaries, eight (8) symposia, six (6) guest lectures. Over 36 resource persons shared their knowledge and expertise at the conference which included 19 renowned speakers from overseas.

From the large number of papers submitted 104 were selected for poster presentations and 54 were selected for oral presentations. The poster presentations were held prior to the main congress and the oral presentations were scheduled during the span of the main congress. These research presentations have been recorded and made available in video format online to assist further dissemination of research findings in Sri Lanka. The abstracts were published as a supplement of the Ceylon Medical Journal.

The total registrants for the pre congress sessions and the main Congress were around 600.

For the first time, an Education Programme for the General Public, in Sinhala and Tamil medium, was conducted parallel to the annual session. The online programme named “Meet Your Doctor”, consisting of six (06) sessions targeting the general public health issues, was webcast live from Wijerama House.

Three (03) orations were awarded to eminent researchers of the medical field at the Congress.

The SLMA Oration was awarded to Professor Sachith Mettananda (*MBBS, DCH, MD(Paed), DPhil(Oxford), FRCP(Edin)*) on Friday 24th July 2020 for “Improving the care for children with thalassaemia in Sri Lanka”.



S. C. PAUL Oration was awarded to Dr. Miyuru Chandradasa (*MBBS (C'bo) MD Psych (C'bo) Child Psych AdvCert (Aus) MRCPsych (UK)*) on Sunday 26th July 2020 for “Child Mental Health: Literacy, Burden, Cultural Aspects and Developing Services for Sri Lanka!”.



N. D. W. LIONEL MEMORIAL ORATION was awarded to Dr. Kapila Jayaratne (*Consultant Community Physician*) on Saturday 25th July 2020 for “The challenge of the early arrivals: Preterm births revisited”.



The programme is given in **Annexure 1**.

The proceedings are available online at <https://www.youtube.com/user/SLMAonline>





5. THE SLMA'S RESPONSE TO COVID - 19

As the apex medical professional body in the country, the SLMA has been working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, other professional colleges and the World Health Organization (WHO) on many fronts in combating COVID-19. The SLMA's role, as it should be, has been one of collaboration and working in partnership.

1. SLMA Webinars and online platforms

The SLMA organized several health education programmes and discussion platforms featuring the health and administrative sectors of COVID-19 pandemic suppression, in a national as well as an international level. The webinars targeting both health professionals and the general public have been conducted effectively through the digital platforms adapting to the new normal.

Furthermore, we have been maximally utilizing SLMA online platforms and social media (CPD platform, Facebook, twitter, YouTube, newsletter) for awareness building and capacity building.

2. Establishing the SLMA Inter-Collegiate Committee

Medical Professional Colleges and Associations have made significant contributions in their efforts in disseminating their expert knowledge and recommendations in their relevant field. However, despite these efforts there has been a lack of visibility and recognition leading to dilution of the efforts of the individual professional bodies.

Taking the above into consideration, the Sri Lanka Medical Association has taken the initiative to establish a forum for all professional bodies (colleges and associations) of medical practitioners in Sri Lanka named the SLMA Inter-Collegiate Committee.

The objectives of the SLMA Inter-Collegiate Committee are as follows:

- To provide a common platform for all professional bodies to communicate allowing a candid and transparent dialogue
- To establish national level consensus among all medical professional bodies with regards to national level guidance and recommendations
- To allow the relevant stakeholders (content experts) to contribute to national level guidance and recommendations
- To prevent duplication of already established guidelines and consensus.
- To add value, validity and weight to the work done by the individual colleges and associations
- To advocate evidence-based best practices among the medical community

With the above objectives in mind all presidents of all invited professional colleges and associations were appointed as members of this committee. This committee is chaired by the President of SLMA and the convenor is Dr. Anada Wijewickrama, President of the Ceylon College of Physicians. Committee members include Dr. BVSH Beneragama, Dr. Shirani Chandrasiri, Professor Thashi Chang, Dr. Manjula Dissanayaka, Professor Vasantha Devasiri, Dr. Jayindra Fernando, Dr. Shanika Fernandopulle, Dr. Padma Gunaratne, Dr. Romesh Gunasekera, Dr. Asoka Gunaratne, Dr. Nandika Harischandra, Dr. C Hathurusinghe, Dr. Pandula Hettiarachchi, Professor Thilak Jayalath, Dr. Jayantha Jayatissa, Dr. Indira Kahawita, Dr. Kaushalya Kasturiarachchi, Dr. Ananda Lamahewage, Dr. DKD Mathew, Dr. Asela Mendis, Dr. Duminda Munidasa, Dr. Namantha Nandasena, Dr. UDP Ratnasiri, Dr. Duminda Samarasinghe, Dr. Nipunika Senadheera, Dr. Ranmini Seneviratne, Professor Mandika Wijeyaratne, Professor Shehan Williams and Dr. Saman Yasawardene. A few other professional colleges and associations are expected to join this committee in the future.

Since its establishment, the intercollegiate committee has worked on producing several consensus documents and recommendations (e.g. Sri Lanka Medical Association Intercollegiate Committee recommendations for maintaining essential Medical Services).



SRI LANKA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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email: office@slma.lk website: www.slma.lk

MEDIA STATEMENT

CHAIRPERSON
Professor Indika Karunathilake
Sri Lanka Medical Association

CONVENOR
Dr Ananda Wijewickrama
Ceylon College of Physicians

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr BVSH Beneragama
Dr Shirani Chandrasiri
Dr Senaka Bandulasena
Dr Manjula Dissanyaka
Professor Vasantha Devasin
Dr Jayaranda Fernando
Dr Shanika Fernando
Dr Padma S Gunaratne
Dr Ramesh Gunasekera
Dr Asoka Gunaratne
Dr Nandika Harischandra
Dr C Hathamsinghe
Dr Pandula Hettiarachchi
Professor Thilak Jayalath
Dr Jayantha Jayatilaka
Dr Indira Kalawita
Dr Karushilpa Kasuramachchi
Dr Ananda Lammawage
Dr DKD Mathew
Dr Asela Mendis
Dr Daminda Manadasa
Dr Nananda Nandadasa
Dr U.D.P. Ratnasiri
Dr MTM Riffey
Dr Daminda Samarasinghe
Dr Nipunika Senadheera
Dr Rannini Senewirane
Professor Manthika Wijeyaratne
Dr Gihan Abeywardene
Dr Saman Yasawardene

The Sri Lanka Medical Association and Inter Collegiate Committee representing all medical professional colleges and associations wish to appreciate the efforts already undertaken by the Government and the Ministries, especially the Ministries of Health and Defence, in all the efforts undertaken to control the COVID 19 epidemic in Sri Lanka.

In this current context, we would like to bring the following observations and recommendations regarding the current serious situation for deliberation.

1. General considerations

- Strengthen the Epidemiology Unit by providing more human resources, expertise and funding.
- Epidemiological Predicting, Forecasting and Mapping to plan preventive and management strategies.
- Revise the patient admission and discharge criteria considering limited resources available
- Optimal and rational use of Information Technology for contact tracing and surveillance.

2. Management of patients

- All PCR positive cases have to be institutionalized, but not necessarily at hospitals. Large halls or dormitories with good ventilation can be converted as isolation centres. This will reduce the burden on the healthcare system and the hospitals.
- National level hospitals should be reserved for maintaining tertiary care

3. Restriction of mobility

- In all the affected areas, mobility needs to be restricted while maintaining essential economic and service activities. All regulations in recent gazette must be strictly applied.
- It may be necessary to completely isolate affected economic centres such as FTZs and ports of entry while maintaining economic process, supply chains and essential services.

4. Ensuring coordination

- Cooperation between directorates, advisory bodies, expert groups within the Ministry, with security forces, task force, and professional bodies

5. Quarantine Process

- Health sector must have the key decision-making power regarding the quarantine process.
- Health professionals should base the decisions on a risk assessment process.

6. Enduring trust and confidence of the general public

- There is a need to strictly enforce guidelines for media reporting on COVID-19. Stigmatization and Criminalization must be avoided
- Maintain supply chains and provision of essential services.



SRI LANKA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION Intercollegiate Committee

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30th May 2020

Press statement on recent trends in gatherings of large crowds

It is with grave concern that we forward this statement regarding the recent trends of large and crowded public gatherings, with complete disregard to the detailed guidelines put down by the Ministry of Health on the stipulated number to be present at public gatherings and maintaining of social distancing.

We are in the midst of a global pandemic of COVID-19 and facing a risk of a second wave of cases in the country. From the initial alert onwards, the health sector with the support of tri forces and police was able to control the epidemic to a great extent. This achievement is mainly due to adherence to key measures of avoiding social gatherings, maintaining physical distance, hand hygiene and use of facemasks. However, we observe that these key control measures have not been widely practiced during the last few days. This contributes to a higher risk of transmission of the infection to the community and a possible resurgence of cases from the community.

It is most distressing that these gatherings are given undue publicity by the electronic media (state & private) as well as through social media portals. Further, it portrays an inaccurate message and a false sense of security to the general public, thus undermining the efforts of the health sector in controlling the epidemic. The key messages of accepted norms of infection prevention become redundant in the face of such behaviour at public gatherings. This will lead to misrepresentation in the way the community behaves, with scant respect to the guidelines advocated by the Ministry of Health, and will have a detrimental effect on the successes achieved during the past few months in effectively controlling the spread of the infection.

Unless strong deterrent action is taken by the authorities, we are likely to see a more serious increase in the number of such public gatherings in the future, leading to an exponential increase of the many problems that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to cause.

We urge all relevant authorities to emphasize the need to strictly adhere to the guidelines advocated for the entire populace, irrespective of all other considerations and to also request the police to take deterrent action irrespective of who violates these regulations. It is imperative that additional steps are taken to limit and perhaps even prohibit the number of such social events organized in the future.

Z P. Karunathilake

Professor Indika Karunathilake
President SLMA

Dr Ananda Wijewickrama

Dr Ananda Wijewickrama
Convenor, SMIC

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Dr MTM Riffy
Dr Duminda Samarasinghe
Dr Nipumika Senadheera
Dr Rannini Seneviratne
Professor Mandika Wijeyaratne
Professor Shehan Williams
Dr Saman Yasawardene

15th June 2020

Mr. N.H.M. Chithrananda
Secretary, Ministry of Education
Sri Lanka

Dear Sir,

Purchase of thermometers for schools to screen students and staff on entry to the premises

Thank you for extending your fullest support as the top representative from the Ministry of Education for the recently held webinar conducted by the SLMA on 29th May 2020. The webinar highlighted the importance of handwashing and the provision of permanent and reliable flowing water sources to the schools. Installing such permanent water supplies to the schools is also a much-needed and long term investment in the education sector as well.

Recently we have come to learn that the Ministry of Education is in the process of purchasing infrared thermometers to be used in schools as a safety strategy for reopening. It was reported in the media that a sum of 116 million rupees is allocated for this purpose.

The current evidence suggests that a significant number of individuals with COVID-19 are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic, therefore they will not have fever. Furthermore, it has been found that those infected with COVID-19 are infected from a few days even before the onset of fever. Thus, checking the temperature at the gate would miss a significant number of potentially infective individuals and it may give a sense of false security to the students, parents and the staff. As this proposed use of thermometers cannot be justified as a preventive strategy based on the current body of scientific evidence, its cost effectiveness is highly questionable. We feel that the substantial sum of money which is to be spent on purchasing these thermometers could be allocated for interventions proven to reduce the risk of transmission such as providing running water and facilities to wash hands, face masks and provisions to maintain physical distancing to at least some of the schools.

We as health professionals representing all specialties of medicine, are of the view that checking temperature of all students on entry into the school premises will not be an effective exercise to prevent a resurgence of COVID 19 epidemic in the country. We also propose that a clear message should be sent to parents informing them not to send any students to the school if they show any respiratory symptoms.

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Dr Nipumika Senadheera
Dr Rannini Seneviratne
Professor Mandika Wijeyaratne
Professor Shehan Williams
Dr Saman Yasawardene
Dr Basil Marasinghe
Dr Lalanthi Senarathne
Professor Rohini Fernandapulle
Professor Madawa Chandratilake

3rd May 2020

Dr Anil Jasinghe
Director General of Health Services
Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medical Services

Dear Sir,

Use of Decontamination Chambers and Spraying of Disinfectants in Public Spaces to minimize the spread of COVID-19 virus

We the Presidents of medical professional colleges and associations representing the Intercollegiate Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association endorse the statement by the Sri Lanka College of Microbiologist on "Use of Decontamination Chambers and Spraying of Disinfectants in Public Spaces to minimize the spread of COVID-19 virus" published on the 30.04.2020.

The statement is as follows;

Standing of the Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists on Decontamination Chambers and Spraying of Disinfectants in Public Spaces

Firstly, we would like to bring the attention of general public to what are called "decontamination chambers". There are a lot of offers to donate these to the hospitals and many public places including the Ministry of Health. Many of these places have installed these chambers at their entrances/exits, making it mandatory for everyone to walk through them. These chambers contain various agents to spray on people including alcohol, chlorine compounds, ozonated water, soapy water and Ultra Violet (UV) radiation.

We would like to draw your attention to the World Health Organization view on this practice.

We strongly advise that spraying of individuals or groups is NOT recommended under any circumstances. Spraying an individual or group with chemical disinfectants or detergents is physically and psychologically harmful and does not limit the spread of COVID-19.

Even if a person is infected with the COVID-19 virus, **spraying the external part of the body does not kill the virus inside the body and may worsen the clinical condition of the individual.**

For alcohol or other disinfectants to be effective, they need to be present in adequate quantities/percentage for a given time (contact time). The nature of chambers does not sufficiently provide this. According to U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for ozone to be effective in destroying harmful bacteria, it must be present at a concentration above levels considered safe for humans.

The main mode of transmission of COVID-19 is by contaminated hands touching the face (eyes, nose, mouth). Therefore, what needs to be done is to sanitize hands rather than try to sanitize the whole body in order to prevent transmission of this virus. Action of alcohol and other chemical disinfectants in these chambers is unlikely to achieve this function. Further, there is a significant fire hazard and there is wastage of alcohol and other disinfectants in large quantities used inside these chambers that is much needed for preparing hand sanitizers and for environmental disinfection in healthcare and other high-risk environments.



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In addition, these chemical disinfectants can have various adverse effects on humans. In particular, spraying of chlorine on individuals can lead to irritation of eyes and skin, bronchospasm due to inhalation, and potentially gastrointestinal effects such as nausea and vomiting. Inhaled ozone can damage the lungs, may worsen chronic respiratory diseases like asthma and compromise the ability of the body to fight respiratory infections. Excessive exposure to UV light may put a user at risk of eye injury, skin burns or even an increased risk of skin cancer.

To date, the FDA has not authorized for market any products using ozone gas or ultraviolet (UV) light even to clean/disinfect or sanitize inanimate objects.

Secondly, we would like to bring attention to the practice of spraying disinfectants to large outdoor areas such as streets and public areas.

SLCM is in the view that the disinfectants should be only sprayed/applied on high/frequently touched surfaces by public such as hand railings, door knobs, poles on transit vehicles, elevator buttons, park/street benches etc. It has been proven that the virus can survive from hours to days in these contaminated surfaces. However, spraying of disinfectants in large quantities into environment can cause environmental pollution, wastage of chemicals, harmful effects on humans as described above and harmful effects on animals/fish. Further, the action of these disinfectants on these outdoor surfaces is not yet evaluated since the disinfectants may disintegrate/degrade by exposure to different environmental conditions such as sunlight. Therefore, rather than spraying large quantities of disinfectants to the environment, we suggest to wipe the high touched surfaces with disinfectant solutions.

Please help prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus by:

1. Providing universal access to public hand hygiene stations and making their use obligatory on entering and leaving any public or private commercial buildings and any public transport facility.
2. Improving access to hand hygiene facilities and practices in health care facilities
3. Providing alcohol-based hand sanitizers in places where hand washing is practically not possible
4. Promoting cough etiquette and respiratory hygiene.
5. Routine cleaning/ wiping of frequently touched hard surfaces with detergent/disinfectant solution.
6. Promoting social distancing even after the curfew is lifted.

Decontamination chambers and widespread spraying may give false sense of security and public may pay less attention to hand hygiene, social distancing and cough etiquette /respiratory hygiene which are of paramount importance in fight against COVID 19.

We believe it is our duty to bring the attention to all concern parties to the side effects of above practices.



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We urge the relevant authorities and policy makers to take the above-mentioned facts into consideration when devising and implementing COVID-19 preventive strategies.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama
President

Dr. Shirani Chandrasiri
President
Ceylon College Physicians Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists Sri Lanka College of Dermatologist

Professor Indika Karunathilake
President
Sri Lanka Medical Association

Dr. Indira Kahavita
President

CC: Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, Senior Advisor to His Excellency the President and the Chairman of the Task Force for Economic Revival and Poverty Elimination

Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva, Head, National Operation Center for Prevention of COVID-19, Chief of Defence Staff and Commander, Sri Lanka Army

Hon. Pavithra Wanniarachchi, Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine

Dr. L.T. Gamliath, Deputy Director General, Environment and Occupational Health and Food Safety Unit, Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine

Dr. P.W.C. Panapitiya, Director, Healthcare Quality and Safety, Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine

Mr. Asela de Livera, President, National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka

Mr. Manjula de Silva, Secretary General /CEO, The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

Prof. Rangika Halwatura, Commissioner, Sri Lanka Inventors Commission

Powerful SLMA Inter-Collegiate Committee formed to face COVID-19 threat

Specialist doctors drawn from different fields have formed a powerful alliance to give evidence-based advice on how to safeguard the country, while gradually easing the restrictions.

Formed under the umbrella of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA), the 'Inter-Collegiate Committee' comprises all professional colleges and associations of medical practitioners.

SLMA President Prof. Indika Karunathilake is the Chairperson, the Ceylon College of Physicians President Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama the Convener; and SLMA Secretary Dr. Sumithra Tissera the Secretary of the committee.

"The reality is such that we will have to co-exist with the new coronavirus and gear ourselves to be vigilant," said Prof. Karunathilake, explaining that the relaxation of restrictions placed to curb the spread of COVID-19 should be based on strong epidemiological data and community participation in which hand-hygiene and social distancing are very much a part of the lifestyle of the people.



**Dr. Ananda
Wijewickrama**



**Prof. Indika
Karunathilake**

This is important considering the current situation faced by many countries after the relaxation of control measures. Singapore which relaxed its restrictions recently is now facing a second wave of infections, he said.

The SLMA Inter-Collegiate Committee aims to provide a common platform for all professional bodies to have a candid dialogue and establish national-level consensus among all medical professional bodies with regard to national-level guidance and recommendations now and in the future.

Newspaper Article on the formation of SLMA Intercollegiate Committee

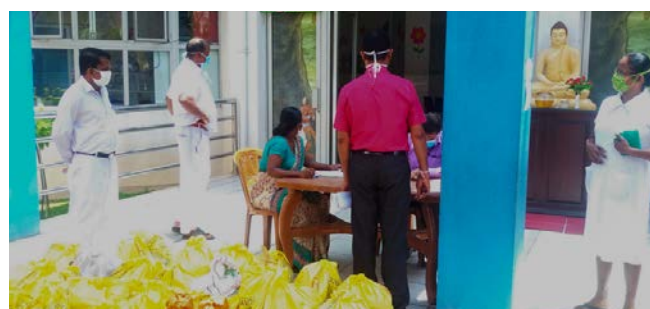
3. The SLMA Prediction Model

A mathematical prediction model for spread of COVID-19 has been developed under SLMA by Prof. Manuj Weerasinghe, Professor in Community Medicine and Dr. Nishantha Perera, Department of Mathematics, University of Colombo. This is a voluntary activity carried out under the long-term agreement between the SLMA and the WHO. Technical support and inputs for the project has been given by the Epidemiology Unit, Ministry of Health, and Dr. Padmal De Silva and Dr. Nalika Gunawardena from the WHO country office.

4. Welfare of Healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 epidemic

The SLMA has taken leadership in ensuring the welfare of the healthcare workers during this crisis as well. Several council members negotiated with major supermarket chains to ensure that these provide services to healthcare staff during the curfew. The SLMA also initiated distribution of dry rations to healthcare staff at hospitals and the first of these took place at the Lady Ridgeway Hospital in Colombo.

Moreover, the SLMA has established a reward system - Covid Appreciation Recognizing Engagement (CARE) Loyalty programme (in collaboration with CH17) to offer cash discounts, additional points and store privileges in retails and other services to healthcare workers in recognition of the immense service rendered by them during this time.



5. Advocacy and increasing awareness of the public

The SLMA has worked tirelessly to educate the public, to clarify doubts, clear misconceptions and bring clarity during these confusing times. Office bearers and members of the SLMA council have made numerous appearances and published many articles on national media to this effect. The posters and videos produced by the SLMA to educate the public are also being widely circulated.

Furthermore, the SLMA has strongly advocated strengthening the supply chain on food and other essential consumables close to households to minimize movement of people.

Public awareness and compliance to physical distancing measures, hand hygiene and early identification of infected individuals with stringent contact tracing will become vital in the coming weeks, as the country tries to slowly relax the restrictions and resume work. Recognizing this major role of the public, the SLMA plans to conduct further programmes and campaigns to increase public awareness through mainstream and social media.

A series of short informative videos on prevention of COVID-19 was publicized by SLMA in collaboration with the Institute of Multimedia Education.

The videos are available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZ8RoZiYEDV0Ou8i2Hf2NYnctmSv2T5Wx>

National Symposium on the Coronavirus outbreak

A symposium on the Coronavirus outbreak titled “Novel Coronavirus Infection (nCoV), Wuhan, China: are we ready to face it?” took place at the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) Auditorium on the 30th of January 2020. This symposium was organised by the SLMA Expert Committee on Communicable disease and the Media Committee. It was attended in person by over 300 participants and over 200 registered and participated in the webinar. It was also attended by the media in order to communicate this message to the general public.

This symposium was chaired by Professor Indika Karunathilake, President of the SLMA. The panel of speakers consisted of Dr. Saranga Sumathipala, (Consultant Virologist, Teaching Hospital, Anuradhapura), Dr. Sudath Samaraweera (Chief Epidemiologist, Ministry of Health), Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama (Consultant Physician, National Institute of Infectious Diseases), Dr. Dilhani Samarasekara (Consultant Community Physician, Quarantine Unit, Ministry of Health), Dr. Sapumal Dhanapala (World Health Organisation, Country representative) and Dr. Indrakantha Welgama (Representative from the International Organisation for Migration).

Dr. Saranga Sumathipala Spoke of virological and diagnostic aspects of nCoV and Dr. Sudath Samaraweera discussed the current global situation with regards to nCoV while Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama spoke of the clinical signs and management. In addition to this, Dr. Dilhani Dissanayake from the Quarantine Unit spoke of the preventive measures taken in Sri Lanka at points of entry. Dr. Sapumal Dhanapala spoke on behalf of the World Health Organisation (WHO), whilst Dr. Indrakantha Welgama covered the migration perspective. Following this, there was a question and answer session.

The Key Messages of the webinar

- The situation calls for high alert and systematic approach, but there is no cause for panic.
- Due to the uncertainty of the situation, the possibility of misinformation and misleading information is high.
- There should be faith and confidence in our health system to overcome this challenge.
- All stakeholders involved should work together.
- Following basic precautions and hygiene is the best method for prevention of spread of the virus.
- Attention given to dengue and influenza should not be diverted.
- At present there is no necessity for school children or the general public to wear facemasks.

Several newspaper articles were published based on the seminar. The WHO has identified SLMA and National Infectious Disease Hospital (NIDH) as the two common dialing locations from Sri Lanka for webinars. This seminar was followed by a series of weekly webinars held every Friday of the week, providing a platform for experts to discuss timely issues related to the epidemic.



In-person attendees



Panel of experts for the symposium

Myths and facts about coronavirus

BY DR. CHARUNI KOTHEMBANGE

Over the past few weeks, all the newspapers' headlines were taken over by the new virus which originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province of China. As the virus spreads, people around the world become more worried and alarmed. They question whether it is deadly, wonder how they can be safe, and whether they should keep their kids at home.

In order to give the correct facts on novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), also known as the Wuhan coronavirus, a symposium and webinar was organised by the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) on 30 January 2020. The event was chaired by SLMA President Prof. Indika Karunathilake while Amradhapura Teaching Hospital consultant medical virologist Dr. Saranga Sumathipala, Ministry of Health Chief Epidemiologist Dr. Sudath Samarawera, National Institute of Infectious Diseases (NIID) consultant physician Dr. Ananda Wijewardena, and Ministry of Health Director – Quarantine Dr. S.M. Arnold shared their expertise with the forum. The symposium was a great success with over 300 participants.

This article is written based on this symposium titled "Novel Coronavirus Infection (nCoV), Wuhan, China: Are we ready to face it?" and facts were obtained from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

What is 2019-nCoV?

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS-CoV) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV). The novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and humans. Detailed investigations of previous coronaviruses found that SARS-CoV was transmitted from civet cats to humans and MERS-CoV from dromedary camels to humans. However, the origin of the 2019-nCoV coronavirus is still not confirmed.



Attendees at the symposium "Novel Coronavirus Infection (nCoV), Wuhan, China: Are we ready to face it?"

The WHO Emergency Committee on the 2019-nCoV under the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) was reconvened on 30 January and declared the outbreak to be a public health emergency of international concern.

At the time of writing, the coronavirus outbreak has killed at least 425 people in China and infected more than 20,000 people across the world as it continues to spread beyond China.

The virus has been confirmed in 23 countries. However, there is only one death reported outside China and according to data gathered at the time, only 153 cases have been identified outside China.

Comparison of 2019-nCoV with SARS and MERS

SARS, also a virus in the corona group, was first identified in November 2002 in Guangdong, China. Out of the 8,096 cases identified with SARS, 744 were reported dead. These figures give a mortality rate of 9.1%.

The MERS coronavirus was first identified in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In MERS, out of the 2,494 confirmed cases, 858 were reported dead. The

mortality rate of MERS is at 34.4%, which is far more severe than SARS. Based on data on 2019-nCoV gathered at the time of writing, the mortality rate of the virus is approximately 2.9%, which is far less than both SARS and MERS.

What are the symptoms of 2019-nCoV?

As with other respiratory illnesses, the 2019-nCoV can cause mild symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever. It can be more severe for some persons and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties. More rarely, the disease can be fatal. Older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as diabetes and heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.

Do Sri Lankans need to worry about coronavirus?

According to the current trend, transmitting the virus in other countries except China is very limited. If we look back at history, Sri Lanka was not affected by SARS, but we were affected with H1N1. Although the transmission rate of nCoV is high, the environmental conditions and temperature appears less favourable for the virus to survive in Sri Lanka. As per the current situation in Sri Lanka, the chances of dying from a road traffic accident, dengue, or Leptospirosis is much higher than dying from coronavirus.

Do we need to panic?

No, we should not panic. However, it is important to be vigilant on the spread of the disease. Since there are many rumours created surrounding coronavirus, it is important to obtain information from reliable sources.

Do we need to wear face masks?

Masks are not needed for the general public who do not have respiratory symptoms. If you have respiratory symptoms like a cough, it is good to wear a mask to prevent spreading your illness.

For healthcare workers who are attending to patients known to be having the infection or suspected to be infected with the virus, wearing a mask and other personal protective equipment is justifiable as a protective measure.

How can we stay protected?

Adhere to the standard recommendations to prevent the infection from spreading, including the regular washing of hands, covering the mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, and thoroughly cooking meat and eggs. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing. Apart from that:

- Wash your hands frequently with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Maintain social distance – maintain a distance of at least one metre (three feet) between yourself and other people, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing, and have fever. When someone who is infected with a respiratory disease, like 2019-nCoV, coughs or sneezes, they project small droplets containing the virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the virus
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth. Your hands tend to touch many surfaces which can be contaminated with the virus. If you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with your contaminated hands, you can transfer the virus from the surface to yourself
- If you have a fever, cough, and experience difficulties breathing, seek medical care early. Tell your doctor if you have travelled to an area in China where 2019-nCoV has been reported, or if you have been in close contact with someone with who has travelled from China and has respiratory symptoms. Whenever you have a fever, cough, or experience difficulties

Spread of 2019-nCoV in China and beyond

Timelines of the spread of 2019-nCoV in China and beyond

31 December 2019

- WHO China Country Office was informed of cases of pneumonia unknown etiology (unknown cause) detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China

1 January 2020

- Closure of Wuhan seafood market

7 January 2020

- New type of coronavirus isolated
- Named as 2019-nCoV (novel coronavirus)

11 January 2020

- First death reported
- WHO China Country Office was informed of cases of pneumonia with unknown etiology (unknown cause) detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province of China
- The National Health Commission of China stated the outbreak is associated with exposure in one seafood and live animal market

- Closure of Wuhan seafood market
- New type of coronavirus isolated and named as 2019-nCoV (Novel Coronavirus)

12 January 2020

- First death reported
- The virus was named 2019-nCoV and the genetics of the virus identified as a shared gene sequence

breathing, it is important to seek medical attention promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Respiratory symptoms with fever can have a range of causes, and depending on your personal travel history and circumstances, 2019-nCoV could be one of them

13 January 2020

- First exported case in Thailand reported

16 January 2020

- First case in Japan reported

19 January 2020

- First case in South Korea reported. Two cases identified in Beijing and one case in Guangdong, China

20 January 2020

- Healthcare workers affected

23 January 2020

- Closure of Wuhan city

Situation in Sri Lanka with timelines

24 January 2020

- First patient with suspected nCoV admitted to IDH. She was a 33-year-old Sri Lankan female student from Wuhan city, who had returned to Sri Lanka on 15 January 2020 and developed a sore throat on 24 January 2020

25 January 2020

- Two Chinese female tourists from Wuhan area admitted with fever and respiratory symptoms

27 January 2020

- First case of nCoV confirmed. She was a 43-year-old tourist from Wuhan

30 January 2020

- Out of the total of 11 patients tested, 10 tested negative

- If you have mild respiratory symptoms and no travel history to or within China, carefully practice basic respiratory and hand hygiene and avoid crowded places as far as possible

(The writer is a Medical Officer at National Blood Transfusion Service)

Sri Lanka Medical Association Position Statement on Effectively Combating the Corona Virus (COVID-19) - March 2020

SLMA has been working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) on many fronts in combating the ill effects COVID-19 epidemic, mainly by enhancing awareness of healthcare professionals and the general public.

Sri Lanka Medical Association has predicted the unfavorable outcomes of COVID-19, at the early stages of the pandemic in Sri Lanka, acknowledging both the Government and the general public. The recommendations of the SLMA were issued to the media, in March are as follows.

Although the total number of laboratory-confirmed patients may seem low at the moment, we are seeing a steady increase with more patients being detected from the community. However, we are still within a brief window of opportunity to act as these cases are from localities with known contagious contacts and there is no report of community spread, as yet. Unless stringent actions are taken to curtail the spread at this moment, Sri Lanka too will witness a rapid increase with community spread. Our health system will soon get overwhelmed beyond their capacity.

We would like to make the following recommendations to curtail and manage the spread of the infection in the country.

- 1. Consider localized lock-down of districts from where most of the infected persons have been identified and where the returnees who were not quarantined reside (those who have entered the country since 1st March 2020). The locations of index cases, contacts and returnees from high-risk countries should be identified the high-risk areas for lockdown. Strict measures should be implemented to prosecute any individual who does not adhere to the regulations and instructions. In case of localized lockdown, there is a need to ensure that essential items are made available for people living in that area.*
- 2. Active and extensive contact tracing and quarantining of suspected, probable or confirmed patients and all contacts of confirmed patients should be done as a routine activity of the preventive sector to eliminate all likely sources of infection from the community. The confidentiality and privacy of the patients must be respected at all times while prosecuting any who do not heed the quarantine measures and instructions.*
- 3. Take immediate measures to set-up or identify dedicated hospitals exclusively for COVID-19 suspected/probable and confirmed patients to minimise spread within health care institutions. Admission of suspected, probable or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to busy tertiary care hospitals precariously exposes hundreds of patients and staff who routinely use these health care institutions. This may accelerate the spread even further. Therefore, these patients should be admitted only to dedicated hospitals with all necessary manpower, material, resources and facilities for referral if needed.*
- 4. Ensure a continuous supply of all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be supplied to the hospitals and the general public. The availability of hand sanitizers and masks and other PPEs should be ensured. The whole supply chain to provide protective clothing, supply of extra oxygen and waste disposal have to be considered to avoid overloading of the system and to ensure safety of frontline health workers.*
- 5. Ban all religious, social, political and other mass gatherings and events for a minimum duration of 2 weeks.*
- 6. Encourage private sector and state sector institutions to facilitate working from home as much as possible, wherever this is valid.*
- 7. Compulsory regulations for commercial institutions to implement sanitisation processes targeting areas frequently used by the customers.*
- 8. Develop and utilize technological advances such as GPS tracking and tele-medicine for surveillance and patient management and to utilise online learning and social media for health education.*

We strongly believe that Sri Lanka's strength is in its public health system. We further believe that Sri Lanka should capitalise on this unique strength and focus even more on preventive measures such as sanitation, health education, disease monitoring, and quarantine measures, as well as isolation of proven or suspected cases.

While we fervently urge the Government to act on the above proposals, we appeal to the public to be safe, responsible and sensible. Let us come together to further strengthen our country's fight against COVID-19.

International Webinar on COVID-19

“Breaking the transmission chain through community empowerment”



The Asia Pacific Academic Consortium of Public Health (APACPH) international webinar on COVID-19 in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) titled “Breaking the transmission chain through community empowerment” took place on the 30th of April 2020. This was the first international virtual conference of its kind conducted by these two esteemed medical associations.

The resource persons consisted of leading experts in the fields of public health, medicine, virology and other relevant fields from countries such as Sri Lanka, Australia, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore. The expert panel from Sri Lanka connected live from Wijerama House, Colombo while the participants and international resource persons connected via the webinar platform. Over 1000 participants from over 40 countries participated in this virtual conference and played a pivotal role in bringing about an international dialog on the COVID-19 pandemic. The moderators of this webinar were Professor Indika Karunathilake, President SLMA and Vice President APACPH and the President of APACPH Professor Wah Yun Low. The objective was to create a platform for different countries mainly in the Asia Pacific region to share experiences and strategies. Professor Wah Yun Low began the programme with the welcome address and she stated that APACPH was glad to create this opportunity for discussion and debate among countries.

Next, different countries presented how they are combating the pandemic. The elite panel of experts from Sri Lanka consisted of Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva, Chief of defense staff and commander of the Sri Lanka Army and at present the Head of National Operations centre of COVID-19, Dr. Anil Jasinghe Director General Health Services (DGHS), Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka and Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama, President Ceylon College of Physicians the Chief Senior Physician at the Infectious Disease Hospital, Sri Lanka. In addition, members from other medical specialties and non-health disciplines, tri-forces, Sri Lanka police and law enforcement were also present to share their views.

The expert panel from Sri Lanka lead by the Lt. Gen Shavendra Silva spoke of how Sri Lanka is managing the pandemic emphasising on the fact that this was identified that this was a combined effort of the different sectors based on the three pillars of containment of affected cases, prevention of further spread and minimizing the losses of life.

The uniqueness of the Sri Lankan approach and the contribution of the military towards the effort was discussed. Dr. Anil Jasinghe spoke about the public health response. He mentioned how the Sri Lankan public health sector has had previous success in elimination and control of infectious diseases. Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama spoke regarding the clinical management and the caseload and the difficulties faced.

Following the presentation from Sri Lankan experts, Dr. Malik Peris, an eminent virologist from Hong Kong discussed their strategies and concepts. He discussed how Hong Kong was a central city where much travelling and movement takes place especially from mainland China and the challenges faced in handling this pandemic in such a setting. The steps taken, particularly aggressive social distancing and the method of testing and how the disease was contained without a lockdown or curfew was pointed out.

The situation in Malaysia was discussed by Professor Awang Bugiba, President of APACPH - Kuala Lumpur Branch and also the head of the National Task force for COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia. He highlighted that there may be a resurgence of cases following easing of restrictions. He also discussed the problems they would face and the solutions identified pertaining migrant workers, the homeless and the indigenous population.

The report from Singapore was presented by Professor Y.Y. Teo, Director for the Center of Epidemiology and Research, Singapore who spoke of problems faced due to the migrant workers and the community. He explained that the strategies carried out are similar to those in Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Hong Kong. He emphasized on the importance of data and evidence-based approach, and clear communication especially to the public. He also explained the importance of statistical mathematical modelling to identify the infectivity rate and the resource requirement.

Professor Gordon Liu, the director of China center for Economics and Research spoke of his observations of China. China has a very strong Central Government leadership and as a result the control of the virus was successful. As hospital care was focused more on COVID patients, he stated that morbidity and mortality from non-COVID illnesses may increase in the coming months as a consequence. He also discussed how socioeconomic standards and inequality also play a role in the control of the disease and its progression. The need for holistic care was stated and to not neglect the other health care problems in the wake of COVID-19.

Professor Colin Binns from Australia, Past Vice President of APACPH spoke of the situation in Australia and he pointed out that the restrictions are less than in some other countries. Similar strategies to other nations are carried out with regard to testing, tracing and prevention. He also stated that nutrition may have had a favorable impact as more people are consuming home cooked foods.

The panelists from Sri Lanka concluded the discussion by highlighting that people would not have to learn to live with COVID-19 and reiterated the importance of sharing information. Dr. Anil Jasinghe expressed the need for a balance between economy and health with gradual normalization of the situation.

This virtual conference was enriched by the lively and engaging dialogue between the participant and the panelists from different countries. Eminent personalities in the audience including Professor Harendra de Silva, President Sri Lanka Medical Council, Dr. Padma Gunaratne, President elect-SLMA, Professor Manuj Weerasinghe, Vice President- SLMA and Mr. Jagath Wickramaratne, President's Counsel made valuable contributions to the discussion.

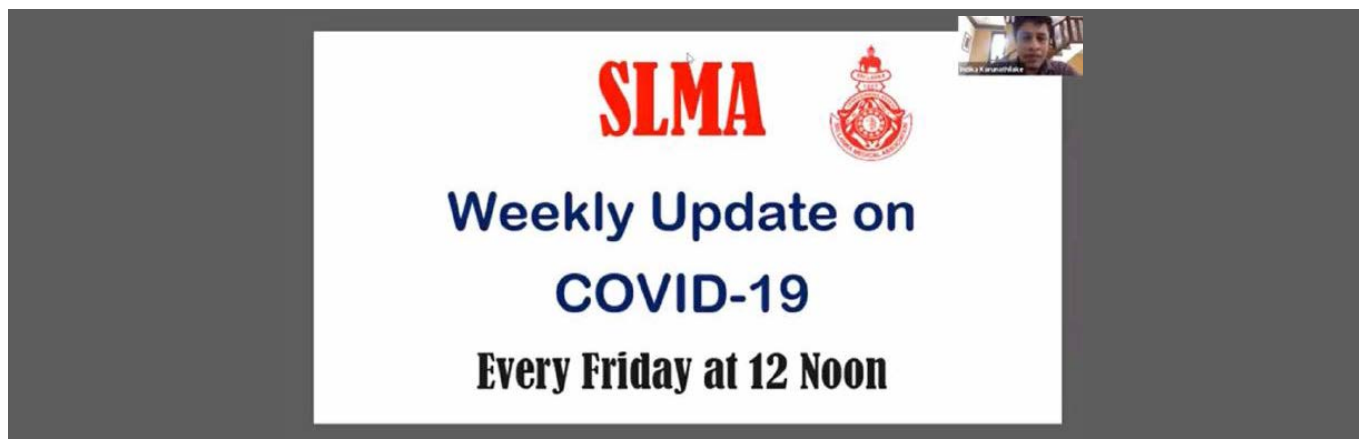
Professor Wah Yun Low and Professor Indika Karunathilake concluded the session by thanking all the panelists, the APACPH executive board, the SLMA and their IT team as well as the participants for their valuable contributions.

Proceedings are available online at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SLMAonline>





SLMA Webinars on COVID-19



The SLMA has conducted weekly webinars on COVID-19 focusing on timely topics as the pandemic progressed in the country.

Webinar on Institutional preparedness

On the 2nd of May, a webinar on institutional preparedness was conducted in collaboration with Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and National Chamber of Commerce. The speakers included Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama, President – Ceylon College of Physicians, Dr. L. T. DDG Environment, Occupational Health and Food safety unit, MOH, Dr. Shirani Chandrasiri, President Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists, Professor Saroj Jayasinghe, Professor of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Professor Lal Chandrasena, Health Sector Advisor of the National Chamber of Commerce, Professor Manuj Weerasinghe, Professor of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. Over 125 participants in key positions attended the webinar.

The webinar can be accessed through the following link. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKfGaem3A1M>



Webinar on Institutional preparedness

A tri-lingual panel discussion with experts in infection control, transport systems, apparel industry, health communication and law enforcement was held on 8th May 2020. The discussion was moderated by Professor Indika Karunathilake and Dr. B. Kumarendran, Consultant Community Physician. Professor Athula Sumathipala, Professor of Psychiatry, Faculty of Health, Keele University, United Kingdom, Mr. Ajith Rohana, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Prof. Amal Kumara, Senior Professor, Department of Transport and Logistics Management, University of Moratuwa, Dr. Shirani Chandrasiri, President Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists, Mr. Hiran Cooray, Chairman, Jetwing Hotels, Dr. Dinil Abeygunawardena, Director of Institute of Multimedia Education, Mr. Ranil Vitarana, Chief Innovation Officer, MAS Holdings.

The webinar can be accessed through the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jKfGaem3A1M>


Working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health

The SLMA has established the Intercollegiate Committee (SMIC) with the participation of all medical professional colleges in Sri Lanka to create a platform to foster dialogue between specialties and to provide consensus recommendations. Recommendations submitted to Ministry of Health from SLMA Intercollegiate Committee include;

Recommendations submitted to Ministry of Health from SLMA Intercollegiate Committee include;

- Recommendations on restarting essential medical services.
- Recommendations of different specialty colleges regarding COVID 19 management.
- Recommendations on performing RT –PCR testing before high risk procedures.
- Recommendations to stop unethical media reporting.
- Unsuitability of decontamination chambers to prevent the spread of COVID-19

A SMIC delegation also met with the Secretary, Ministry of Health and presented the work done so far and discussed the way forward for collaboration. A bi-monthly meeting between the Secretary and SMIC was agreed upon. Possibilities of an online CPD program for doctors too was discussed.



SRI LANKA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
Established in 1887
"Wijerama House", No. 6, Wijerama Mawatha, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka.

6th April 2020

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Joint Press Release
Sri Lanka Medical Association, Ceylon College of Physicians and Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists

DIAGNOSTIC AND SCREENING TESTS FOR COVID-19

The present strategy of COVID-19 prevention is unique to Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka and the Ministry adopt a policy of preemptive quarantine and isolation of suspected contacts even before they develop symptoms. This approach reduces the margin of error and its success is evident by the fact the COVID-19 transmission in Sri Lanka is still limited to clusters.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends confirmation of cases of COVID-19 by nucleic acid amplification tests (NAAT), such as Reverse-transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR). Many in-house and commercially available assays are used in different laboratories across the world.

The primary strength of molecular tests is that they directly detect the gene sequences of the virus in the early stages of infection when the patient is infectious. Thus, detection of COVID-19 by RT-PCR can be done from five days prior to the onset of symptoms to several days after symptoms have waned off (Figure 1).

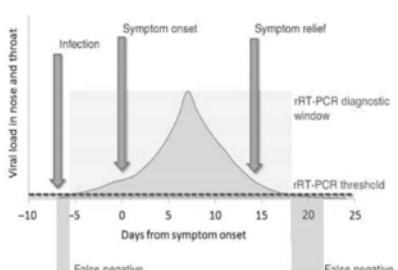


Figure 1 – Viral shedding and rRT PCR during the course of the disease

However, no laboratory test is perfect. Although the test carries an almost a 100% specificity, these molecular tests can miss COVID-19 infections depending on the sample collected or if the patient carries a low viral load. The sensitivity is improved by repeating the RT-PCR tests.



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Detection of IgM/IgG antibodies to diagnose COVID-19 infection has been discussed in length in many meetings at local and national level. Advantages such as ease of testing, availability of results within a shorter time and possibility of using as a point of care (PoC) test have been cited by the proponents. However, this test cannot replace the value of RT-PCR test in the acute diagnosis of COVID-19.

IgG/IgM rapid tests rely on the detection of antibodies made by the patient in response to COVID-19 infection. Patients may take up to 7 to 12 days to produce antibodies to COVID-19 infection (Figure 2). Therefore, patients in the early stages of the disease will be missed if rapid serological tests are used for diagnosis. It will lead to more spreading within the community due to false assurance depending on a negative IgG/IgM test result.

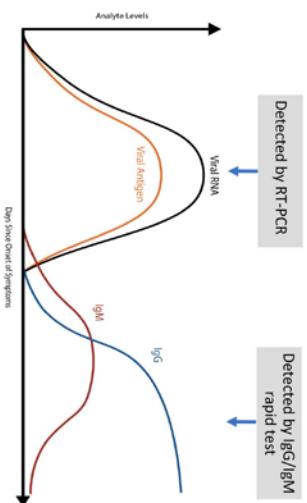


Figure 2 – Viral RNA and IgM and IgG antibody levels in blood during the course of illness

Furthermore, elderly or immunocompromised patients may never (or only much later) develop antibodies to COVID-19 infection. They are the most vulnerable as well as the ones with the highest mortality due to this infection. Detection of IgM antibodies early in infection is also problematic due to cross-reactions resulting in false-positive results (RCPA, 2020; Joseph & Schumm, 2020).

However, these IgG/IgM rapid antibody tests in paired samples (in acute and convalescent phase) could aid in the diagnosis in cases that are highly suspected of having COVID-19 infection but a negative PCR test. Furthermore, these tests help in detecting unrecognized past infection and immunity for retrospective assessment of the attack rate or extent of an outbreak.

However, it is not the current need of the country as far as suppression of the spread of the disease is concerned. Introducing a widespread screening test that is not sensitive and becomes positive late in the course of the disease is not compatible with the unique pre-emptive policy of Sri Lanka, which has been proven to be successful so far. For example, if such a method is adopted, it may convey a misleading message to the public, hindering the current efforts of the Government to curtail the spread of the virus and community participation.



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Our suggestions, as Presidents of Sri Lanka Medical Association, Ceylon College of Physicians and Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists, regarding Diagnosis and Screening for COVID 19 during the current stage of epidemic are to,

- Increase the RT-PCR testing capacity to 1500 tests per day.
- Conduct community surveillance in hotspots. According to the epidemiology unit currently there are 2000 first level contacts in Sri Lanka. If these first level contacts can be covered through risk-stratified/pooled sampling, it will:
- Provide the evidence-base on how the next level of contacts should be screened
- Address current concerns and uncertainty regarding the number of asymptomatic patients

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that any shift of the current policy of testing for COVID-19 to be considered within the border framework of the present successful public health response and not as an isolated technical matter.

Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama
President – Ceylon College Physicians

Dr. Shirani Chandrasiri
President – Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists



Professor Indika Karunathilake

President - Sri Lanka Medical Association
Mobile: 0717353570



Collaborative Projects with the World Health Organisation (WHO)

The SLMA has initiated several collaborative projects with the WHO on COVID-19. These include;

- A rapid qualitative assessment of public perceptions to support Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) for COVID-19 preparedness and response
- An assessment of the perceptions of the current COVID-19 situation, its health, social and economic impact and experiences related to obtaining medical services
- Situational Analysis of the preparedness of secondary and tertiary curative settings for COVID-19 response in Sri Lankans.

Collaboration to evaluate COVID-19 Inventions

The SLMA, SMIC, the Sri Lanka Association of Young Scientists (SLAYS) in collaboration with the National Inventions Commission on COVID-19 inventions launched a Health Innovation Awards programme, concurrent to the 133rd Anniversary International Medical Congress. Noteworthy health innovations related to COVID-19 were recognized and appreciated.

BY DR. DINESHANI HETTIARACHCHI SIRISENA

Covid-19 has brought to the fore an accelerated technological transformation in a matter of weeks. The Health Innovation Awards organised by the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) recognised some noteworthy innovations that came out through this crisis.

OSShCa KVD 20 managed to secure the gold medal in the Medical Doctor's Health Innovation category. We spoke to the team led by University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ) Department of Anatomy lecturer Dr. Sajith Edirisinghe, who was behind the pioneering efforts in developing a mobile semi-automated chest physiotherapy machine, featuring prolonged cardiopulmonary resuscitation which can be managed by a single person via a mobile application.

The basis for this innovation was the need for chest physiotherapy in complicated cases of Covid-19. Even though most of the infected patients show mild to moderate manifestations, in the older and more vulnerable groups, the complications are common. According to recent estimates, one in six patients will have a Covid-19-related complication that could be life threatening.

Some of the respiratory complications are:

- **Acute respiratory failure** – when you have acute respiratory failure, your lungs might not pump enough oxygen into your blood or might not take enough carbon dioxide out. Both of these can occur simultaneously
- **Pneumonia** – in pneumonia, the air sacs in your lungs become inflamed and filled with fluid, making it harder to breathe
- **Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS)** – with ARDS, the lungs are so severely damaged that fluid begins to leak into them. As a result, the body has trouble getting oxygen into the bloodstream. You may need mechanical help to breathe, such as a ventilator until your lungs recover.

These complications need multidisciplinary treatment modalities, out of which chest physiotherapy plays a major role. Chest physiotherapy is a technique used to mobilise or loosen secretions in the lungs and the respiratory tract. This is especially helpful for patients with a large amount of secretions as well as those who are unable to bring these secretions out by coughing. Chest physiotherapy consists of external mechanical manoeuvres such as chest percussion, postural drainage, and vibration to augment mobilisation and clearance of airway secretions. However, providing chest physiotherapy during a pandemic such as this has the risk of exposure to the virus.

A physiotherapist will need to get close to the patient to conduct the procedure optimally, and performing these manoeuvres while wearing personal protective gear is no easy task. This is an energy-consuming process that ultimately leads to a reduction in work efficiency. As a solution to this problem, Dr. Edirisinghe and the team designed OSShCa KVD 20, a mobile semi-automated chest physiotherapy machine which can be operated remotely. The other members of the team are Ousanda Samarasinghe from the Department of Mechanical Engineering of the University of Moratuwa; Shashika Liyanwala and Viraj Niroshan from the Faculty of Technology at USJ; and USJ Faculty of Medical Sciences Department of



Machine trials underway at Colombo South Teaching Hospital



The two-way speaker system can have direct communication with the patient and the live video system can observe the patient's behaviour and facial expressions.

The safety precautions are maximal, equipped with a handheld emergency stop button with the patient. As such, the user can stop the entire system immediately if he/she feels any discomfort. The machine can deliver percussion to any part of the chest, as it has the capacity of multiaxial mobilisation. The other advantage is that the height of the machine can be adjusted to suit the height of the bed. The mobile application also has the emergency stop, sensor mechanism to measure chest dimensions, and deliver chest physiotherapy according to pre-planned patterns and specified routes.

The other capability of OSShCa KVD 20 is the ability to deliver prolonged cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Providing prolonged CPR continuously for 30 minutes or more is a very distressing, energy-consuming process. Due to exhaustion, healthcare professionals might not have the same strength and depth of compression during each compression cycle if he/she was to do it manually. In the emergency setup, this difficulty is overcome by multiple staff members taking turns to give chest compressions. However, this can be overcome by OSShCa KVD 20 as it has the capacity to deliver undisturbed synchronised CPR compressions at the correct rate and depth at any given time. This saves healthcare workers time that can be utilised for other lifesaving procedures.

Since the machine has a pre-planned mode and the mobile application has the CPR mode, it's a matter of setting the machine at the correct position and giving the command to deliver chest compressions (CPR). This function of the product is ideal for ICU (intensive care unit) setups where this could save professional man-hours. Furthermore, the machine has now undergone two cycles of clinical testing at the Colombo South Teaching Hospital.

OSShCa KVD 20

Covid-19 healthcare innovation



Dr. Sajith Edirisinghe



Didula Hapuarachige



Viraj Niroshan



Ousanda Samarasinghe



Kaveen Samarasinghe



Chamara Mathangaweera

Family Medicine physiotherapist Chamara Mathangaweera.

The team has already applied for the patent for OSShCa KVD 20 from the National Intellectual Property Office of Sri Lanka (NIPO). The team is very grateful to consultant obstetrician, gynaecologist, and USJ Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology senior lecturer Dr. Madhura Jayewardena; University of Colombo Professor in Clinical Psychology Prof. Piyanjali de Zoysa; and all the doctors of the 16th batch at the Faculty of Medical Sciences of USJ, who contributed through funding in developing this machine during

the Covid-19 lockdown period.

With this machine, healthcare personnel could deliver the treatment without being exposed to the infection. This machine has applications beyond Covid-19 as it can be used on any patient requiring chest physiotherapy. Some such indications are those who cannot cough out the respiratory secretions in conditions such as cystic fibrosis, bronchiectasis, atelectasis, lung abscess, neuromuscular diseases, and pneumonia. Hence, this innovation has wider utilisation and can save time for the physiotherapist.

Since this machine can be controlled

distally via Wi-Fi technology, it will be very useful in future healthcare facilities such as microhospitals. This is a new concept of healthcare delivery where there are small-scale in-patient facilities called microhospitals that are an alternative to provide both medical care to underserved communities as well as an alternative to long-waiting lists, especially in the government setup. Therefore, a machine like OSShCa KVD 20 is ideal to deliver day patient care in specialised small microhospitals.

The safety precautions are maximal, equipped with a handheld emergency stop button with the patient. As such, the user can stop the entire system immediately if he/she feels any discomfort

The most common procedures used in chest physiotherapy are postural drainage and chest percussion, in which the patient is rotated to facilitate drainage of secretions from a specific lobe or segment of the lung while being clapped with cupped hands to loosen and mobilise retained secretions that can then be expectorated or drained. The same procedure can be performed from the machine since the percussion segment can be rotated according to the body texture and the chest position (seated or lying down). The pressure applied from the percussion descent is equivalent to the chest physiotherapy given by hand.



Medal with certificate

About the writer

The writer, Dr. Dineshani Hettiartachchi Sirisena, is a family physician with a special interest in rare genetic diseases and regenerative medicine currently working as a lecturer at the Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Health Education Campaign

The SLMA has worked tirelessly to educate the public, to clarify doubts, clear misconceptions and bring clarity during these confusing times. Office bearers and members of the SLMA council continued to make numerous appearances on national and electronic media and published many articles on national media to this effect. The posters and videos produced by the SLMA to educate the public are also being widely circulated in social media.

Creating awareness through electronic media

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 <p>Actions for COVID 19 Prevention Prof. Indika Karunathilake</p> <p>YOUTUBE.COM Actions for COVID - 19 Prevention කොවිඩ් උවදුරෙන් මිදීමට ඇති ක්‍රියා මාර්ග.... Prof. Indika Karunathilake. ...</p>	 <p>YOUTUBE.COM FACE THE NATION 31/08/2020 ... Subscribe us: http://bit.ly/NewsfirstSubscribe Watch more vi...</p>

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<p>නව කොරෝනා වෛරසය උණුසුම් මෙන්ම තෙත් කාලගුණික තත්ව වල පැතිර යා හැකිද?</p> <p>අලුත්ම තොරතුරු වලට අනුව සෑම කොරෝනා වෛරසය උණුසුම්, තෙත් ඇතුළු ඕනෑම කාලගුණික තත්ත්වයක් යටතේ පැතිර යයි.</p> <p>විශේෂයෙන් ඔබ කොවිඩ් 19 වාර්තා වූ ප්‍රදේශයක සිටින්නේ නම් හෝ සංචාරය කරයි නම්, කාලගුණය බලා බැලීමට වඩාත් ඉහළින් ආරක්ෂා වීමට වග බලා ගන්න. ඒ වෙනුවෙන් කල හැකි හොඳම දෙය නිතර අත් සේදීමයි. මෙමගින් පාසය, ඇත් සහ කට ස්පර්ශ කිරීමෙන් වෛරසය ආසාදනය වීම වැඩි වළක්වා ගත හැකිය.</p> <p>Sri Lanka Medical Association #SLMA #COVID19 #StopTheMyths</p>	<p>නව කොරෝනා වෛරසය වයස්ගත පුද්ගලයින්ට බලපානවාද, නැතහොත් තරුණයින්ද ඊට ගොදුරු වනවාද?</p> <p>සෑම වයස් කාණ්ඩයකටම අයත් පුද්ගලයින්ට නව කොරෝනා වෛරසය (COVID - 19) ආසාදනය විය හැක. වයස්ගත පුද්ගලයින් සහ වෙනත් රෝගී තත්ව ඇති පුද්ගලයින් (ඇදුම්, දියවැඩියාව, හෘද රෝග වැනි) වෛරසය සමඟ දරුණු ලෙස රෝගාතුර වීමට වැඩි අවදානමක් ඇති බව පෙනේ.</p> <p>ලෝක සෞඛ්‍ය සංවිධානය සෑම වයස් කාණ්ඩයකටම අයත් පුද්ගලයින්ට වෛරසයෙන් ආරක්ෂා වීමට පියවර ගන්නා ලෙස උපදෙස් දෙයි. උදාහරණයක් ලෙස හොඳ දෑත් සවිපාරක්ෂාව සහ ස්පර්ශ කළ පෘෂ්ඨවලට අනුගමනය කිරීම වැනි පියවර අතර වේ.</p> <p>Sri Lanka Medical Association #SLMA #COVID19 #StopTheMyths</p>
<p>නිතරම හොඳින් ජලය පානය කිරීම කොරෝනා රෝගයෙන් ආරක්ෂා වීමට ප්‍රමාණවත්ද?</p> <p>ජලය පානය කිරීම ඔබගේ සෞඛ්‍ය තත්ත්වය හොඳින් පවත්වා ගැනීමට බෙහෙවින් උපකාරී වේ. නමුත් ජලය පානය කිරීමෙන් පමණක් ඔබට කොරෝනා වෛරසයෙන් ආරක්ෂා විය නොහැක.</p> <p>ඔබට උණ, කැස්ස, පුස්ම හැසීමේ අසාදනශාලීයය යන රෝග ලක්ෂණ තිබේ නම් වසාම වෛද්‍ය උපදෙස් ලබා ගන්න. ඔබ ලකඩදි වෙනත් රටක සංචාරය කර ඇත්නම් හොපැඩ්ලිට් විය හැකි වෛද්‍යවරයාට පවසන්න. හැඩ්නම් ඔබ මේ රෝග ලක්ෂණ සමඟ පැමිණෙන බව කලී නිසා ඔබේ වෛද්‍යවරයාට දැනුම් දෙන්න. එය ඔහුට/ඇයට ඔබ වෙනුවෙන් සුදානම් වීමට උපකාරයක් වනු ඇත.</p> <p>Sri Lanka Medical Association #SLMA #COVID19 #StopTheMyths</p>	<p>උණුසුම් ජලය ස්නානය කිරීමෙන් නව කොරෝනා වෛරස රෝගය වළක්වා ගත හැකිද?</p> <p>ඔබේ සාමාන්‍ය ශරීර උෂ්ණත්වය 36.5°C සිට 37°C පමණ වේ. මෙම අගය ඔබ ස්නානය කරන ජලයේ උෂ්ණත්වය මත වෙනස් නොවේ. අතිශයින්ම උණුසුම් ජලය ස්නානය ඇත්තේම් සාබිසර විය හැකි බැවින් එය ඔබේ සමෙහි පිළිස්සුම් ඇති කළ හැකිය.</p> <p>Covid - 19 හි ආරක්ෂා වීමට හොඳම ක්‍රමය වන්නේ ඔබේ දෑත් නිතර පිරිසිදු කිරීමයි. මෙසේ කිරීමෙන් ඔබේ අත්වල ඇති වෛරසය තුරන් කර ගත හැක. මුඛය සහ නාසය දෑත්වලින් ස්පර්ශ කිරීමෙන් ඇතිවිය හැකි අසාදන වළක්වා ගත හැක.</p> <p>Sri Lanka Medical Association #SLMA #COVID19 #StopTheMyths</p>

Posters

Webinar on Breaking the Chain of Transmission through Rational and Scientific Approach

Webinar on Breaking the Chain of Transmission through Rational and Scientific Approach, organized by the SLMA was moderated by Professor Indika Karunathilake and Professor Manuj Weerasinghe. The resource persons were Dr Kushlani Jayathilake, Consultant Microbiologist, Sri Jayawardenapura General Hospital, Professor Athula Sumathipala, Chairman, National Institute of Fundamental Studies, Professor Neelika Malavige, Department of Immunology and Molecular Medicine, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayawardenapura, Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama, President, Ceylon College of Physicians, and Dr. Bodhika Samarasekera, Consultant Respiratory Physician, DGH-Gampaha.

Timely topics including the Overview of current situation, Need for appropriate precautions, Different strains of virus mutations, Need for clear policies and support systems for health staff who get exposed, Responsible media reporting and the Priority of breaking the chain of transmission were discussed in this programme. The webinar was attended by several participants and was conducted successfully.

The full presentation is available from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yceJHQTsAjU>

BY DR. CHARUNI KOHOMBANGE

COVID-19

Breaking the chain of transmission

● Rational and scientific approach

Sri Lankans were returning to near-normal life during the last couple of months, until the detection of a Covid-19 infected patient at the Gampaha District General Hospital (DGH) on 3 October. It was an incidental finding through a screening process practiced over about the last three months for influenza-like infections. This incident is a positive indicator of the effectiveness of the Sri Lankan healthcare system. To discuss the strategies for breaking the chain of transmission, the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) conducted a webinar on 10 October with eminent consultants related to the field. SLMA President Prof. Indika Karunathilake moderated the webinar. This article excerpts the discussion.

Brandix cluster: Are we in community transmission?

To declare a community transmission, there has to be regular appearance of patients from the community which cannot be traced to the index case. Hence, the current situation cannot be considered as community transmission. However, Sri Lanka is in stage "3b", which is known as a stage of cluster epidemic. Hence, there's enormous collective responsibility to contain the disease and prevent progressing to the fourth stage, which is community transmission.

"The numbers were rising rapidly during the first few days after tracking the patient from the garment factory in Minuwangoda, which reflected the rate of contact tracing and testing. Tracking of contacts had been a challenge due to deficiencies in the

management of the garment factory in relation to keeping the records of the staff members. However, all contacts of the factory were traced, tested, and managed accordingly.

"Labour exchange within the garment chain was evident, and another workers was identified as being PCR-positive in the Koggala Brandix plant," said University of Colombo Faculty of Medicine Department of Community Medicine Head Prof. M.C. Weerasinghe.

Strengthen the surveillance system

Gampaha DGH consultant respiratory physician Dr. Bodhika Samarasekera, who was the initiator of the turning point, shared his experience. "During the last two months, we were on alert. Even though the disease was apparently under control within the country, the situation of neighbouring countries did not allow us to loosen the grip. Hence, the surveillance system was increased with random sampling of patients," he said.

With regards to patient management, the monitoring of the patients' oxygen saturation is important and chest x-rays, ultrasound scans, and other basic lab investigations are needed in the primary management. It is important not to overlook the management of patients with other chronic lung diseases. It is especially important to ensure early diagnosis and treatment of TB (tuberculosis) patients who can present similar

symptoms as Covid-19. According to Dr. Samarasekera, a considerable number of deaths had been reported within this year due to TB.

Maximally utilise the minimum resources available

Ceylon College of Physicians President Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama, the forerunner in the frontline, shared his expertise at the discussion. With the exponential increase in numbers, it is vital to maximally utilise the minimum resources available. PCR testing should be focused mainly on the suspected patients and surveillance should be strengthened through testing at OPDs and wards. According to Dr. Wijewickrama, in the present outbreak, patients are mostly asymptomatic or having only mild symptoms. However, as the patients are experiencing a high viral load, they may still be in the early stages of the disease. Therefore, it is imperative to monitor the patients closely for about five to seven days to predict the patient outcome.

heads of the institutions for making arrangements to maintain space at the workplaces and providing hand-sanitising and hand-washing facilities. Furthermore, staff having symptoms should not be allowed to attend work, as it causes more harm than good in the long run.

Dr. Jayathilake further stressed the need to adhere to national guidelines in all parts of the country in relation to the quarantining process.

Current virus strain is highly infectious

University of Sri Jayawardenapura Faculty of Medical Sciences Department of Immunology and Molecular Medicine Head Prof. Neelika Malavige, who is an expert in immunology and molecular medicine, shared her valuable experience on Covid-19 viral genotype sequencing. She is currently researching all the Covid-19 viral strains identified in Sri Lanka to study their mutations and virulence. According to Prof. Malavige, seven major Covid-19 strains and 153 mutations have been identified around the world up to now.

With her studies on virus strains in Sri Lanka, an important mutation has been detected, which is associated with high viral loads with high transmissibility.

"In order to contain the epidemic, precautions need to be taken irrespective of the strain of the virus," she added.

Covid stigmatisation

Professor in psychiatry and National Institute of Fundamental Studies Chairman Prof. Athula Sumathipala emphasised the harmful effects of stigmatisation of Covid-19 patients and their families.

"Relatively, the public has failed in their duty, which has to be reflected seriously. Mobilising people has been affected due to stigmatisation, prejudice, and worries," said Prof. Sumathipala. Using fear as a health promotional tool is totally incorrect and unacceptable, as it affects negatively by aggravating

stigmatisation. Especially in the process of quarantining, it should never be highlighted as a punishment but rather as a preventive healthcare measure. Based on cognitive behavioural theory, the way people think and behave depends on how they perceive a message. If quarantine is perceived as a punishment, people tend to avoid and hide.

He requested the Covid-19 National Steering Committee to adopt evidence-based behavioural approaches and strategies in managing the patients and contacts.

"A huge shift in behaviour and attitude is important, as we have to live with Covid-19 for a significant time ahead," said Prof. Sumathipala.

The media has to play a responsible role in engaging, empowering, and involving the public in controlling the pandemic. It is the responsibility of the media to propagate the correct message to the public.

"The Covid-19 pandemic is far from over. Hence, there is a dire need of clear policies and a support system for the healthcare workers who get exposed. Priority should be on breaking the chain of transmission based on a rational and scientific approach," said Prof. Karunathilake, in his closing remarks.

Even though the disease was apparently under control within the country, the situation of neighbouring countries did not allow us to loosen the grip. Hence, the surveillance system was increased with random sampling of patients

Gampaha DGH consultant respiratory physician Dr. Bodhika Samarasekera

SLMA President Prof. Indika Karunathilake

Physicians President Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama

University of Sri Jayawardenapura Faculty of Medical Sciences Department of Immunology and Molecular Medicine Head Prof. Neelika Malavige

National Institute of Fundamental Studies Chairman Prof. Athula Sumathipala

Ceylon College of Physicians President Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama

Department of Community Medicine Head Prof. M.C. Weerasinghe

Contributing to ensure COVID-19 free election process for the General Election 2020

The Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) worked in close collaboration and supported National Election Commission of Sri Lanka in conducting the General Election 2020 in accordance with COVID-19 prevention guidelines. It was a momentous achievement of the Election Commission to be able to conduct a national election when many countries in the world are forced to reinforce lockdown restrictions due to the raging pandemic. We consider it a privilege as the national medical association to be a part of this operation as an independent technical contributor. The process that was witnessed at all polling stations in the country was planned and designed through a series of meetings and consultations. On 05th June 2020, representatives of the SLMA were invited by Mr. Mahinda Deshapriya, Chairman, Elections Commission for a meeting to discuss the preventive health measures that should be implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during the General Elections 2020.

This first meeting was attended by Professor Indika Karunathilake, President SLMA, Professor Manuj Weerasinghe, Vice President SLMA, Dr. Chandana Atapattu, Council Member SLMA and Assistant Registrar, Sri Lanka Medical Council, Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama, President Ceylon College of Physician and Senior Consultant Physician at National Infectious Diseases and Dr. Shirani Chandrasiri, President Sri Lanka College of Microbiologist and Consultant Microbiologist Colombo South Teaching Hospital.

Objectives of this meeting were to minimize the risk of novel coronavirus transmission during the election campaign, minimize the risk of novel coronavirus transmission during the processes and procedures of conducting the election and conducting a fair, transparent and equitable election process adapting to the “new normal” This first meeting was followed by a series of meetings till the election was successfully concluded, each meeting lasting several hours and sometimes going past midnight.

Provision of Technical Support

During the process of rescheduling elections, SLMA officials were invited several times to discuss the epidemiological pattern of the diseases and the possibility of holding the election and were able to provide detailed information and our position on this issue as an independent group. The stance of SLMA was that, the election can be held with adequate precautions during the controlled phase of the epidemic. The election process provided it is conducted with the necessary precautions will not increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The inputs were helpful in refining the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Health on conducting a COVID-19 free election. Further, we contributed immensely to operationalize the guidelines throughout the election process at ground level. Many discussions with the officials involved in the election process and the knowledge and experience of officers at the Election Commission were of great help.

Planning of the COVID-free voting process

SLMA participated at the mock polls from Ambalangoda and the counting rehearsals. The process was carefully observed to refine the guidelines further and added new processes to make the polling stations COVID free. The process was further refined during subsequent mock sessions.

The specifications derived from these mock polls and rehearsals included details on times of reporting to duty, hand washing and use of hand sanitizers, other preventive measures to be practiced by election officials and voters, security measures, physical distancing while voting, identification of voters, use of non-touch techniques in handling documents and decontamination of frequently touched surfaces.





the sunday morning brunch
Sunday, July 12, 2020

HEALTH

Ensuring the health and safety of all

Election process for the 'new normal'

BY DR. DINESHANI HETTIARACHCHI SIRESENA

The efforts to keep Covid-19 at bay have been successful in Sri Lanka so far. The country's response to the pandemic has not been vastly different from the recommendations and prescribed measures practised globally. However, a key difference has been in the timing of those measures and the intensity with which they were applied. The national response was initiated even prior to the detection of the first case. With the situation reaching stability, Sri Lanka is now approaching the phase of gradually relaxing the strictly enforced restrictions. Although the pandemic is slowly brought under control, experts do predict that life would not be the same as in the pre-Covid era.

However, as we gear towards a national election, we have to ensure all measures are taken to prevent a new outbreak. In this backdrop, we spoke to Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) President Prof. Indika Karunathilake on the guidelines put forth by the Ministry of Health with recommendations from the SLMA on conducting the general election whilst giving utmost priority to the health of the citizens. These guidelines were formulated with the following objectives to ensure the general election can proceed and all those who wish to vote may exercise their right to vote while:

- * Minimising the risk of novel coronavirus transmission during the election campaigns
- * Minimising the risk of novel coronavirus transmission during the processes and procedures of conducting the election
- * Striving for a fair, transparent, and equitable election whilst adapting to the "new normal"

The recommendations of the SLMA and professional colleges regarding conducting the 2020 general election while adhering to the preventive health measures and the "new normal" have two components: Processes and procedures to be adopted by the

them to stations closer to their residence. Working closely with health officials such as regional epidemiologists, public health staff (Medical Officer of Health, public health inspectors) can help in the monitoring of and adherence to health measures.

Good hygienic measures need to be adhered to especially while handling and distributing election cards. When selecting venues and election centres, the new norms need to be kept in mind. Hence, these places should have adequate space and ventilation to prevent overcrowding. The public must maintain physical distancing and to facilitate this, clear signboards with instructions should be in place. Installation of pedal-operated hand washing facilities, providing hand sanitiser, and placing proper waste disposal facilities are important. If possible, time slots should be given to the voters to arrive at polling stations according to their polling card numbers. This will reduce overcrowding keeping the vulnerable age group (over 60 years of age) in mind. For polling stations with large numbers of voters, increase the number of voting stations (adhering to the above criteria). It is recommended that the election operation centre at the central and district levels should have an operational health cell with a public health official to assist health concerns. The central operations room at the EC should have a health co-ordinating cell with a specialised health team during the important days of the election process to assist and advise on urgent health concerns, i.e. on the postal voting day; three days before the main election day until the conclusion of the election.

Good hygienic measures need to be adhered to especially while handling and distributing election cards. When selecting venues and election centres, the new norms need to be kept in mind. Hence, these places should have adequate space and ventilation to prevent overcrowding.

Election Commission (EC) and those that have to be followed by the political parties and candidates during their election campaigns.

Measures to be taken before the election

Before the election, it is important to train all officials (both central and provincial level) on prescribed health measures laid down by the Ministry of Health. This goes hand in hand with providing the necessary provisions of personal protective equipment (PPE) – i.e. face shields, face masks, gloves, sanitiser – to all election officials. Measures should also be taken to minimise the travelling of election officials; this can be achieved by allocating

The manner of campaigning and polling must reflect the changed reality and it is a moral obligation of all stakeholders involved in conducting the election to have the best interest of their citizens at heart. It is vital that all forms of mass political rallies are not allowed.

Election campaigns

It is important to emphasise that physical distancing rules and sanitary measures should be adhered to during these campaigns since they can become a hotbed of infection if the guidelines are ignored.

As such, this may also be a good opportunity to change the campaigning culture; as opposed to large gatherings, candidates should opt for digital campaigning tools, mass media, and social media. Prof. Karunathilake stated that the manner of campaigning and

polling must reflect the changed reality and it is a moral obligation of all stakeholders involved in conducting the election to have the best interest of their citizens at heart. It is vital that all forms of mass political rallies are not allowed. Even pocket



Prof. Indika Karunathilake

meetings conducted in poorly ventilated, congested places can be considered of high risk. House-to-house propaganda campaigns and manual distribution of material should be minimised to break the chain of transmission. If all political parties can show committed adherence to Covid-19 preventive measures, this will be a golden opportunity to create an ideal election culture for the new normal.

During the election process

This is when maximum precautions should be taken to break the chain of transmission. The SLMA has a 10-step recommendation list for all voters.

1. All voters must wear a face mask and maintain physical distancing. This is to be guided by marked slots on the floor for each voter.
2. Hand washing facilities/ alcohol-based sanitisers should be provided to each voter before entering the main voting room.
3. Clear instructions should be given displayed at the entrance while maintaining physical distancing.
4. The voter has to reveal the face only in front of the officer dealing with identification. Once done, the mask should be properly worn again (officer dealing with identification should wear proper PPE).
5. Hand sanitisation must be carried out after pulling up the mask again.
6. The finger must be marked using a blunt-ended match stick (non-touch technique).
7. Ballot paper must be issued using gloved hands with no physical contact with the voter.
8. Voters should vote using their own pens.
9. Hand sanitisation must be carried out before leaving the polling station (pedal operated, where possible).

Counting of votes

The process of counting can be considered as the high-risk step during the voting process since it happens in a crowded, congested setting over several hours. Therefore, it has to be carried out promptly to ensure that during the collection and counting of votes, all individuals are maintaining strict standards of stipulated hygiene and safety measures. The guidelines to be

adhered to during the counting process are still being formulated by the EC. The objective is to minimise the risk of an outbreak while considering practical realities.

1. Those who have fever/ respiratory symptoms should not be involved in the counting process.
2. Hand sanitising must be done before entering the counting room and at regular intervals.
3. Wearing surgical masks must be made mandatory.
4. Strict precautions must be taken during the serving of refreshments and meals.
5. Windows must be kept open to ensure ventilation.

Prof. Karunathilake stated that based on these recommendations, the EC conducted a successful trial election with technical assistance from the SLMA on 1 July 2020. The objective was to design an election process adapting to the new normal, ensuring the safety of the citizens. The dedication and commitment of the EC officials are commendable.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way people conduct almost every aspect of their lives, including the way they vote. As the general election is fast approaching, work should begin now to keep Covid-19 at bay. It is the responsibility of every Sri Lankan citizen.

About the writer

The writer, Dr. Dineshani Hettiarachchi Siresena, is a family physician with a special interest in rare genetic diseases and regenerative medicine currently working as a lecturer at the Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.



INFOGRAPHIC BY THILINA EGGOAGE

Contribution of SLMA towards training election officers and educating the public on the new process

SLMA was able to produce a detailed video to demonstrate the actual process, which would take place at a polling station. This helped to train the officers participating in the election and educate the general public. This video was telecasted in all mass media and social media.

Video is available online at <https://youtu.be/Mr0zh3FQoFg?list=PLZ8RoZiYEDV2LOEUi05j-XBq0iQWS9Jl>



The challenge of operationalization of guidelines for voting for those under quarantine

One of the key concerns was enabling voters still under institutional and home quarantine to vote at polling stations. We discussed this issue in detail during the numerous meetings we had with the Election Commission. We proposed several options and plans to ensure their voting rights are preserved whilst safeguarding the safety of the public. We also actively contributed to implement these plans during the voting process on the day of the election.

Role of the SLMA during the election

SLMA team played a central role in managing the health desk at the National Operation Room at the Election Commission. SLMA proposed a plan for health screening at counting centers and it was established with the collaboration of regional health directors and of the Medical Officers of Health in those areas. We provided assistance in resolving and managing the health concerns and COVID-19 related issues and complaints during the day of election. Officials inspected several polling booths and health screening centers at counting centers to ensure that guidelines were being adhered to.



Observations on the election process

SLMA is confident in stating that the election process was conducted adhering to the expected health recommendations. It was possible mainly due to the resilience of the Election Commission and all the officers at all levels. Further, the enthusiasm of the officers at the Election Commission to share their wide experience is a rarely seen feature in the public service. This was one of the key factors which helped successful implementation of health guidelines during the election.

It should also be highlighted that these observations may be helpful in the future. Commencing counting of votes the next day improved the efficiency of the officers, reduced the stress and helped implement the health guidelines successfully. Implementation of health guidelines during the election imparted confidence in the process and it would be beneficial to establish a health advisory committee at the onset to make recommendations and oversee the matters related to health. Including health guidelines in a summarized form in the manuals of all the election officers would also help improve their knowledge and adherence to these guidelines in the future.

Covid-free environment for polls, a team effort - SLMA

BY CAROL ALOYSIUS

The Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) was the main technical contributor in enabling the National Election Commission of Sri Lanka to conduct a Covid-19 free election at the polling stations across the country. How was the Covid-free voting process planned?

Q. The Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) was the main technical contributor in enabling the National Election Commission of Sri Lanka to conduct a Covid-19 free election at the polling stations across the country. How was the Covid-free voting process planned?

A. The SLMA worked in close collaboration with and supported the National Election Commission of Sri Lanka to conduct a disease-free election by strict adherence to Covid-19 prevention guidelines. The process witnessed at all polling stations islandwide was planned and designed through a series of meetings, starting on June 5, when the SLMA was invited by Chairman, Elections Commission Mahinda Deshapriya to discuss the health measures needed to prevent the spread of Covid-19 during the parliamentary elections 2020, the goal being to minimise the risk of the novel Coronavirus transmission during the election campaigns the election.

Q. Your Association also introduced new guidelines and recommendations on how to keep

the polling stations disease-free in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. What were they?

A. The guidelines covered the entire election process and based on preventive measures such as maintaining physical distancing, non-touch techniques, wearing masks and hand hygiene. To highlight some of the salient features they included the following: All elections officers addressed by a health official regarding the preventive measures to be undertaken to safeguard them and the voters. The queues of voters maintained the physical distancing requirements of one metre, marked on the floor or the road. Hand washing facilities/ or alcohol-based sanitisers provided to each voter before entering the main voting room. All identification documents checked using a

non-touch technique. Ballot papers, to be handed over using a non-touch technique. A piece of equipment to apply ink on the voter's finger, using a non-touch technique.

Voters were encouraged to bring their own pens. After marking the ballot paper and voting, voters were again directed to a hand washing station with soap and water provided with a hand sanitiser. The counter surfaces used to mark the ballot paper frequently decontaminated using 70% isopropyl alcohol spray every 10 minutes.

Q. Was your team able to monitor if they adhered to during the entire election process island wide?

A. Yes. We set up a health centre at the Elections Commission to monitor, process and address any

health related issues.

Q. Managing the health desk at the national operation room at the Election Commission must have been a difficult task. What did it involve?

A. We used different techniques. The idea of health screening at counting centres was proposed by us. Medical screening was an essential precaution. We set up medical screening at all counting centres by coordinating with the regional health directors and Medical Officers of Health. That way we were able to help the Election Commission to resolve and manage health and Covid-19 related issues and complaints on the day of the election.

We also inspected several polling booths and health screening centres

at counting centres to ensure a Covid-free environment. The counting process was considered a higher risk than the voting process since it takes a long time and mostly happens in a crowded, poorly ventilated setting.

It was important to apply as many precautions as possible considering the risk and the logistics. At the main centres, advanced technology with image and thermal sensors too were employed.

Q. Given your limited facilities as an independent body you must have faced some challenging moments? What were they?

A. Frequent deviation and lack of adherence from prescribed precautionary measures were observed during the campaigns. The delay in the gazette of regulations to be fol-



Prof. Indika Karunathilake

lowed also hampered the power of health authorities to intervene.

Q. The SLMA also produced a video as part of its contribution towards training and educating the officers and the general public. Tell us more about this concept.

A. We were able to produce a detailed video to demonstrate the actual process at the polling station. This helped to train and educate the officers participating in the election and the public. The video was telecast in Sinhala and Tamil in all electronic, print and social media reaching an audience of over one million with very positive feedback.

Q. One of the key concerns on the election process was allowing voters still under institutional and home quarantine. Combining voters' rights and health issues can be a tricky business. Your comments?

A. Yes, a key concern on the whole election process was allowing voters still under institutional and home quarantine. We were able to come up with several options and plans to secure their voting rights on the day of the election.

Q. Finally, your observations on the recently concluded 2020 parliamentary election process?

A. Overall it was a smooth and well-coordinated process. The implementation of precautionary health measures was of a very high standard. The Elections Commission and all stakeholders deserve credit for this achievement.



Hospital Preparedness Rapid Assessment-Gampaha District

An assessment of COVID preparedness of hospitals in the Gampaha District was carried out by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Medical Association on the 11th of October 2020 in collaboration. This was conducted by Professor Manuj Weerasinghe, Professor Indika Karunathilake, Dr. Dilantha Dharmagunawardhana and Dr Nirmala Loaganathan. The hospitals that were assessed included Biyagama Divisional Hospital, Dompe Divisional Hospitals, Radawana Divisional Hospital, Udupila Divisional Hospital, Divulapitiya Divisional Hospital, Akaragama Divisional Hospital, Ja Ela Divisional Hospital and Pamunugama Divisional Hospital.

The strengths of these institutions as well as the challenges that must be overcome in terms of management of COVID -19 were identified. The willingness and positive attitudes of all staff, good ventilation and open spaces in all hospitals and the pre-emptive approach taken by these institutions with preparations already being underway were praiseworthy positive aspects observed. Some of the notable problems identified were the lack of equipment and resources; infrastructure not conducive to the management of patients requiring isolation; issues related to testing; transport difficulties of staff and the issues related to management of clinical waste. Based on these observations, recommendations were made to each of the hospitals and methods of implementation were also recognized. A report was submitted to the Secretary, Ministry of Health for further action.



A situation analysis of the Peliyagoda Fish Market cluster

A situation analysis of the Peliyagoda Fish Market cluster was conducted by Sri Lanka Medical Association in collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries.

According to data of PCR testing performed on 19th of October shows that those who were in wholesale and retail stalls were more affected than the fishermen and labourers who handle fish directly and customers who came there.

Over-the-phone Interviews with who were tested positive indicated poor adherence to infection control measures.

The high number of infected persons, highly conducive environment and long exposure at the Peilyagoda Fish Market made people highly vulnerable to the infections. Based on available information, it can be concluded that congested, crowded and highly humid environment, behaviours conducive to spread such as lack of adherence to infection control measures have led to rapid spread within the fish market. Several wholesale buyers travelling in the same vehicle, poor infection control measures, dense network of fish vendors have contributed to spread within congested urban areas. There is no evidence of transmission due to consumption of fish.

Out of 866 who were tested positive at Peliyagoda Fish Market on 23rd of October 866, many were from densely populated and congested urban slum areas. This too may have played a role in rapid spread to first and second level contacts or close contacts.

SLMA has suggested a systematic approach in order to reestablish and sustain a COVID free supply-distribution mechanism. This approach consists of both structural and behavioural changes in the entire fisheries industry. Breaking the chain of transmission at all steps from catching to consumer can only be achieved by strict adherence to basic preventive measures. Minimization of crowd gathering during all steps is essential.





Spread of COVID-19 Infection Among Workforce in Fisheries Industry

Analysis Report



Prepared by
Ministry of Fisheries
&
Sri Lanka Medical Association

6. 150 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF COLOMBO MEDICAL SCHOOL

1st of June 2020 marked the Sesquicentennial Anniversary of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. In the midst of lockdowns, curfews and widespread uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this historic occasion was commemorated in a fitting manner by staff, students and alumni of the Faculty.

The Sri Lanka Medical Association together with the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo co-hosted a Virtual International Conference on the evening of 1st of June 2020. Marking the 150th Anniversary Celebrations of the Faculty, the Conference provided a platform for distinguished alumni to highlight how learning experiences at the Faculty positively affected nations around the world.

The Conference was Chaired by Professor Indika Karunathilake, President of the SLMA, Professor Vajira Dissanayake, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo and Professor Chandrika Wijeyaratne, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Colombo. This Virtual Conference was the first of its kind hosted in Sri Lanka, featuring an in-studio audience of distinguished alumni and over 600 virtual participants from 17 different countries. Speakers included alumni from Australia, Bhutan, Canada, Singapore, UK, USA as well as the World Health Organisation.

The Conference commenced with the launch of a collection of historic documents from the time period between 1870 - 1960, compiled by Emeritus Professor Laal Jayakody. Following the presentation of his volume, Professor Jayakody spoke of the difficulty in locating and accessing such documentation which inspired him to compile these primary sources which would be of value to future researchers.

The main symposium was on "Reflections on how education at the Colombo Medical School moulded their future". Speakers included Professor Dushyantha Jayaweera, Associate Professor Siri Kannangara, Professor Mahesan Nirmalan, Associate Professor Padmini Ranasinghe, Dr. Dujeeva D Samarasekera, Professor Suranjith Seneviratne and Professor Krisantha Weerasuriya. While reminiscing on the time spent as the Colombo Medical Faculty, the speakers highlighted exemplary practices in medical education including the dedication of the teachers, variety of clinical experience and the advantages of merit based free education.



7. FOUNDATION SESSIONS 2020

The foundation sessions of 2020 were held on 6th & 7th November at the NDW Lionel Memorial Auditorium at Wijerama House, Colombo 07. Due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation and curfew in Colombo the sessions were conducted virtually with only the resource persons being present at SLMA.

The sessions were ceremonially inaugurated on 6th November with Dr. Anula Wijesundere, Immediate Past President gracing the occasion as the Chief Guest.



The highlight of the inauguration was the EM Wijerama Endowment Lecture, which was delivered by Professor Narada Warnasuriya, Emeritus Professor of Paediatrics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura on "Personal Reflections on a Professional Career".

The sessions on 7th November covered four (04) topics which were of much interest to medical professionals both in primary and tertiary care. There were more than 800 participants connected virtually, the highest ever registered for a foundation session.

The topics covered were on nutrition, Neurology, injury and cardiology. The detailed programme and resource persons are given separately (**Annexure 5**).

The proceedings are available online at <https://www.youtube.com/user/SLMAonline>



8. APACPH 2020 – VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The annual conference of the Asia Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health (APACPH) was held from 5th to 9th December 2020. The pre-conference programme consisted of the Scientific Writing Workshop, ECN (Early Career Network) Workshop, Global Public Health Network Meeting, and the General Assembly which were webcast live from Wijerama House, Colombo, Sri Lanka. The main conference was held on 8th and 9th December at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo, Sri Lanka, with around 300 participants worldwide joining virtually.

The Sri Lanka Medical Association, the oldest national professional association of the Asia-Pacific Region, in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, were the co-hosts of the APACPH 2020 conference.

As one of the most influential international organisations in Public Health, APACPH helps create an environment of mutually rewarding scientific research and collaboration that promotes advances in public health through its annual conference. The importance of the conference was underscored as newly emerging challenges in global healthcare including the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting to the “New Norm”, rapid growth of NCDs, threat of antimicrobial resistance, and ethics in delivering public health services are required to be addressed in a timely and effective manner.

The APACPH 2020 conference themed “Public Health in the New Normal” was a platform to discuss the way forward with digital technologies, health surveillance and advances in universal and global health. An eminent panel of international resource persons shared their insights, in addition to the national level expertise in public health. Hundreds of participants from over 40-member countries took part in this event. The enthusiastic participation of overseas researchers and public health academics was a highlight, as despite the pandemic, they were able to join the proceedings virtually. The conference sessions were open to both students and researchers in the public health sector.

We received abstracts representing countries of South Asia, South East Asia, Australia and Africa. The Early Career Network (ECN) Photography Competition themed “Public Health in the New Normal”, was held on a virtual 3D platform in order to provide a real-life experience, while addressing the complex societal issues of a global pandemic.

The keynote address was by Chief Guest, Clinical and Public Health Virologist, Professor Malik Peiris. He is a Professor and Chair in Virology at the School of Public Health, University of Hong Kong. He is most noted for being the first person to isolate the SARS virus. Professor Peiris discussed the science underlying the public health interventions in responding to COVID-19 in the Asia Pacific Region.

The speakers of the conference symposia included an eminent panel of public health specialists including Professor Srinath Reddy, the President of the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and Prof. Tin Tin Su, Director of SEACO. In his Guest Lecture, Sir Michael Marmot, Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health and Chair of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health, WHO, emphasised the role of social determinants of health in the new normal.

International organizations including the World Health Organization, World Bank and Asian Development Bank were generous sponsors of the APACPH 2020 conference. Resource persons from these organizations contributed to the rich academic environment, creating multidisciplinary learning opportunities for the participants.

The Walter Patrick Memorial Lecture was held for the first time, to commemorate the late Professor Walter K. Patrick, Professor of Public Health, University of Hawaii, a global leader in public health. The lecture was delivered by Professor Colin Binns, John Curtin Distinguished Professor of Public Health, Curtin University.

During the span of four decades APACPH has grown into one of the largest public health organizations in the region. APACPH 2020 was a truly unique forum, bringing together public health academics, leaders, and practitioners, overcoming the challenges posed by the global pandemic through the optimum utilization of advanced technology and making the best of the goodwill of humankind.

The proceedings are available online at <https://www.youtube.com/user/SLMAonline>

The detailed programme is given in **Annexure 2**



Prof Patrick was appointed editor for child survival for the APJPH.

Emphasis on culture, equity and minority groups as they influenced public health outcomes.

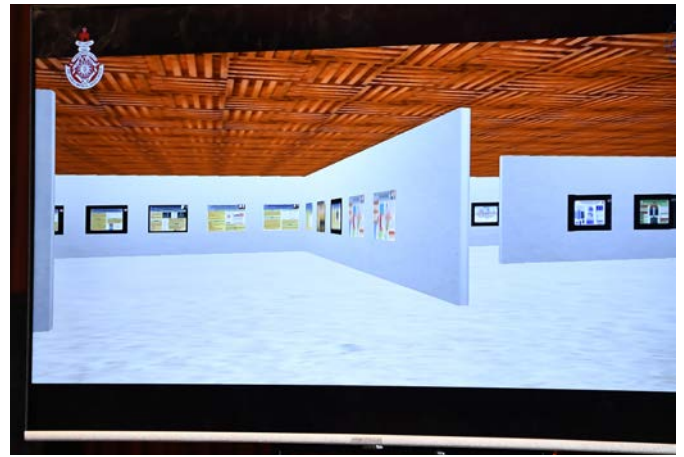
Subsequently we have learned more of the importance of nutrition and health on influencing the direction health for of life. WHO and UNICEF now emphasise the importance of first THOUSAND DAYS- from conception to around two years of age

The emphasis on the first 1000 days continues in the APJPH

The most cited paper published in the APJPH was a review of the long term was the review on the

Long Term Public Health Benefits of Breastfeeding.(276 citations)

At the APACPH Meetings we have continued to run workshops on the importance of public health nutrition and to publish reports on Dietary Guidelines, Infant Feeding Guidelines and Complementary Feeding in the APJPH.



9. HISTORY OF MEDICINE LECTURE 2020

Dr. C. G. Uragoda History of Medicine Lecture 2020 was delivered by Past President SLMA, Dr. B. J. C. Perera MBBS(Cey), DCH(Cey), DCH(Eng), MD(Paed), MRCP(UK), FRCP(Edin), FRCP(Lon), FRCPCH(UK), FSLCPaed, FCCP, Hony FRCPCH(UK), Hony. FCGP(SL), Specialist Consultant Paediatrician at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium on 26th February 2020. The title of the lecture was "Progression of Paediatrics: From ancient times, to the modern era". It was followed by fellowship and refreshments.



10. SLMA AWARDS

E. M. Wijerama Prize

Meteorological Associations of Leptospirosis in Different Climate Zones of Sri Lanka; a Time Series Analysis

Warnasekara YPJN¹, Agampodi SB¹, Ranawaka HCJ², Dembatapitiya DRWNK², Wijesinghe PATAB², Dewapriya IKS², Koralegedara KIS³, Abeynayake R⁴

¹Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

²Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

³Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

⁴Department of Agribusiness management, Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management, Wayamba University Sri Lanka

S. E. Seneviratna Prize

The Incidence and Patterns of Lung Cancers in Sri Lanka from 2001-2010: Analysis of National Cancer Registry Data

Jayarajah U¹, Arulprashanth A², Fernando A¹, Ilangamge S², Seneviratne SA¹

¹Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

²Department of Thoracic Surgery, National Hospital for Respiratory Diseases, Sri Lanka

H. K. T. Fernando Prize**Are They Ready to Handle Anaphylaxis?: a Study among Pre-Intern Medical Graduates of Three Universities in Sri Lanka**

Wijekoon CN¹, Fernando ADA², Dissanayake AS³, Wettasinghe I¹, Gunawardana M², Minuwanpitiya G³, Jayawardane P¹, Thenuwara PM¹

¹Department of Pharmacology, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

²Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo

³Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna

Sir Nicholas Attygalle Prize**Prevalence of Cardiovascular Conditions among First Trimester Pregnant Females in Anuradhapura District**

Hettiarachchi DAU, Lokunarangoda NC, Agampodi TC, Jayasinghe HMIU, Koralegedara KIS, Warnasekara YPJN, Madhushika MMH, Agampodi SB

Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Wilson Peiris Prize**A Double Blind Randomized Placebo Controlled Clinical Trial of Coccinia grandis (L.) in Patients with Newly Diagnosed Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus**

Wasana KGP¹, Attanayake AP¹, Weeraratna TP², Jayatilaka KAPW¹

¹Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, Galle, Sri Lanka

²Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, Galle, Sri Lanka

Professor Daphne Attygalle Prize for the best paper in Cancer**The Incidence and Patterns of Lung Cancers in Sri Lanka from 2001-2010: Analysis of National Cancer Registry Data**

Jayarajah U¹, Arulprashanth A², Fernando A¹, Ilangamge S², Seneviratne SA¹

¹Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

²Department of Thoracic Surgery, National Hospital for Respiratory Diseases, Sri Lanka

Sir Frank Gunasekera Prize for the best paper in Community Medicine & Tuberculosis**Prevalence and Correlates of Smoking, Alcohol Consumption and Illicit Substance Abuse in School Adolescents in Sri Lanka**

Kumbukage MP¹, Senanayake SJ², Gunawardena SRHP¹, Wickramasinghe SC¹, Lokubalasooriya A¹, Gunawardena NS³, Peries R⁴, Wickramasinghe SA⁵, Maddumahewa CV¹

¹Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine, Sri Lanka

²Queensland University of Technology, Australia

³World Health Organization Country office, Sri Lanka

⁴Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka

⁵Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick

Professor Kumaradasa Rajasuriya Prize for the best paper in Tropical Medicine**Clinico-Epidemiology of Hypnale zara (Hump-Nosed Viper) Envenoming in Sri Lanka**

Rathnayaka RMMKN^{1,2,3}, Ranathunga PEAN⁴, Kularatne SAM⁵

¹Intensive care Unit, Teaching Hospital, Ratnapura

²Department of Veterinary Pathobiology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine & Animal Science, University of Peradeniya

³Postgraduate Institute of Medicine (Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics), University of Colombo

⁴Medical Unit, Teaching Hospital, Ratnapura

⁵Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya

Special Prize in Cardiology (Not Awarded)

Dr. S. Ramachandran Prize for the best paper in Nephrology**A Retrospective Comparative Study on the Outcomes of a Low Dose and High Dose Cyclophosphamide Regimen in the Management of Class III and IV Lupus Nephritis in Sri Lanka**

Wijayaratne DR^{1,2}, Atukorala I^{1,2}, Gunawardena NS³, Wijesundara DA¹, Gunarathna K¹, Lanerolle RD^{1,2}

¹University Medical Unit, National Hospital of Sri Lanka

²Department of Clinical Medicine, University of Colombo

³World Health Organization Country Office for Sri Lanka

The Sri Lanka Association of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics award for the Best Paper in Pharmacology**Echocardiographic Evaluation of Anthracycline-Induced Cardiotoxicity in Breast Cancer Patients from Southern Sri Lanka**

Sandamali JAN¹, Hewawasam RP², Fernando MACSS³, Jayatilaka KAPW², Madurawe RD⁴, Sadanandan PP⁴, Ekanayaka U⁴, Horadugoda J⁴

¹Department of Medical Laboratory Science, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Ruhuna, Galle

²Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, Galle

³Department of Economics & Statistics, Faculty of Social Sciences & Languages, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

⁴Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya

SLMA prize for the best poster**Risk Factors and School Absenteeism in Children with Asthma from an Urban Area of Sri Lanka**

Fernando YN¹, Anuradha KWDA², De Silva U¹, Alahakoon M³, Handunnetti S¹, Wickramasinghe P²

¹Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology

²Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo

³Faculty of Medicine, Colombo

CNAPT Award (Not awarded)**G R Handy Award for the best paper in Cardiology published in the year 2018 (Not awarded)****Glaxo Wellcome Research Award for the year 2018****Evaluation of prehospitization and primary care related factors associated with selected disease outcomes of dengue patients in two tertiary care hospitals in Sri Lanka**

Dr. M. Salpitikorala,

Family Physician, Health Smart The Family Medical Clinic, No. 276, Rajagiriya Road, Rajagiriya

FAIRMED Foundation**Psychological distress and stigma among patients attending Central Leprosy Clinics, Sri Lanka**

Dr. P. L. A. N. Liyanage,

Specialist Dermatological and Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Community Medicine,

Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna

SLMA Research Grant 2019**Clinical audit on Statin prescription of patients with type 2 diabetes in clinic attendees at a tertiary care hospital, Clinical practice vs guidelines**

Dr. Thushara Matthias, Consultant Physician, Professorial Medical Unit, Colombo South Teaching Hospital

Professor Wilfred S E Perera Travel Award in Bioethics 2019 – Joint winners (Not awarded)**Dr. Thistle Jayawardena Research Grant for Intensive Care 2019****Lung function and associated functional limitation in survivors of pulmonary haemorrhage secondary to severe Leptospirosis**

Dr. W. D. Dilshan Priyankara, Consultant Intensivist, MICU/ NHSL

11. CLINICAL MEETINGS

The SLMA held a total of 11 clinical meetings this year in collaboration with Professional colleges.

MONTH	COLLABORATING COLLEGE
January	Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians
February	Sri Lanka College of Haematologists
October	Sri Lanka College of Cardiologists
	College of Anaesthesiologists and Intensivists of Sri Lanka
	College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Sri Lanka
	Sri Lanka College of Dermatologists
November	College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka
	Perinatal Society of Sri Lanka
December	Ceylon College of Physicians
	Sri Lanka College of Psychiatrists
	Sri Lanka College of Pulmonologists

A wide range of topics in all specialties were covered during the meetings, which were very well attended. Case discussions and MCQs were included to meet the learning needs of the postgraduate trainee attendees.

The monthly clinical meeting is a continuing professional development (CPD) activity targeted mainly postgraduates in training, general practitioners and grade medical officers. The CPD committee and the Council have approved their recognition to award CPD points under the category designated "Teaching activities".

Majority of the monthly clinical meetings were available as webinars for the remote participants as a live telecast with the facility to ask questions from the resource persons. These webinars had a higher number of active participation not only from local doctors but from overseas participants as well.





This year for the first time all the lectures and interesting case presentations will be converted to written form and they will be published as a book under the title of "lecture notes on monthly clinical meetings 2020".

The detailed programmes are given in **Annexure 3**.





Virtual Academic Sessions
2020
Ratnapura Clinical Society

Prof Aloka Pathirana
Chief Guest

**THURSDAY
DEC 03
2020**

Prof Nirmali Wickramaratne

Prof Indika Karunathilake

Dr Ananda Wijewickrama

Dr Panduka Karunayake

Prof Shalini S Ranganathan

Prof Anuredhe Dassanayake

Prof Athula Koluwarachchi

Dr Wasanthi Abeykoon

Dr Dimuthu Gunasekera

Dr Kapila Gamage

Dr Kapila Mendis

Dr Amila Weerasekera

Dr Banduniri Rathnayake

In Collaboration with Sri Lanka Medical Association and
The Sabaragamuwa Chapter of College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka,

12. REGIONAL MEETINGS

A total of three (3) successful meetings were held during the year 2020 covering 3 Provinces in the country. The meetings were well attended by our regional members.

The organizations of the regional meetings were actively supported by the SLMA members who represented the provinces and the assistant secretary Dr. Sajith Edirisinghe, who organized these meetings in an admirable manner. The presentations at these regional meetings were of very high quality.

All participants received a certificate of participation carrying “CPD” points to emphasize the importance of continuous professional medical education to keep abreast with new knowledge and skills.

1. **Joint Clinical Meeting with the Base Hospital, Panadura**
29th January 2020 at the Auditorium, MoH Office, Panadura
2. **Joint CME Programme with the Asiri Group of Hospitals**
27th February 2020 at the Auditorium, Asiri Surgical Hospital
3. **Joint Clinical Meeting with the Kandy Society of Medicine**
18th October 2020 (Zoom Meeting)
4. **Virtual Academic Sessions of the Rathnapura Clinical Society**
3rd December 2020 (Zoom Meeting)

The academic programmes of these meetings are given in **Annexure 4**.



Joint Virtual Regional Meeting

Organized by the
Sri Lanka Medical Association
With
The Kandy Society of Medicine



Moderators

 <p>Prof. Indika Karunathilake Professor in Medical Education Department of Medical Education Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.</p>	 <p>Dr. Dushantha Madagedara Consultant Respiratory Physician Editor Sri Lanka College of Pulmonologists National Hospital Kandy</p>
 <p>"Suicide and self-harm in Sri Lanka: Can it be prevented?" Prof. Thilini Rajapaksha, Professor in Psychiatry, Dept. of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya</p>	 <p>'A challenge for joyful living: novel psychoactive substances' Dr. Chathurie Suraweera, Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry, Dept. of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo</p>
 <p>Real life scenarios on depression Dr. Pabasari Ginige Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya</p>	 <p>Primary Prevention of misbehavior Prof. Rasnayaka M. Mudiyanse Consultant Paediatrician Professor in Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya</p>

Concluding Remarks by



Dr. Sumedha Samakantha
Consultant Respiratory Physician, District General
Hospital, Nawalapitiya,
Joint Secretary

On Sunday, the 18th of October 2020 at 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm

13. THERAPEUTIC UPDATES

Therapeutic Updates were organised by the Medicinal Drugs Committee of the SLMA and delivered in 2019 at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium, No.06, Colombo 07.

Therapeutic Update on “Non-alcoholic Steatohepatitis”

Prof. Anuradha Dassanayake

Professor in Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya

28th February 2020 from 12.00 noon – 1.00 pm

Therapeutic Update on “Adult Epilepsies”

Dr. Kishara Gooneratne

Consultant Neurologist, General Hospital, Hambanthota

30th September 2020 from 12.00 noon – 1.00 pm

14. SYMPOSIA, SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

Expert Committees of the SLMA organized several seminars and workshops held at the NDW Lionel Memorial Auditorium of the SLMA during the year 2020.

Symposium on “Infections in the elderly: the challenges”

9th January 2020 at 12.00 noon at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Organized by the Expert Committee on Communicable Diseases of the SLMA

Symposium on “Novel Coronavirus Infection (nCoV), Wuhan, China: Are we ready to face it?”

30th January 2020 at 12.00 noon at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Organized by the Expert Committee on Communicable Diseases and Media Committee of the SLMA

Symposium on “Cosmetics, Plastics and Processed Food: Are we Killing Ourselves?”

20th February 2020 at 12.00 noon at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Symposium organized by the Media Committee of the SLMA

Symposium on “Injury Prevention”

28th February 2020 at 8.30 am at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Career Guidance Seminar

30th August 2020 at 8.30 a.m. at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Organized by the Expert Committee on Health Management of the SLMA

Seminar on “Overdiagnosis – Too Much Medicine, 2020”

13th October 2020 at 12.00 noon at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Seminar on “Covid 19; Dealing with Life Stressors”

12th November 2020 at 9.30 am at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Organized by the Media Committee of the SLMA

Symposium on “Traditional Medicines used in NCD care: Where are we?”

16th December 2020 at 11.00 am at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Organized by the Non Communicable Diseases Committee of the SLMA

The detailed programmes are given in **Annexure 6**.

15. CEYLON MEDICAL JOURNAL

Editors: Professor A. Pathmeswaran
Professor Senaka Rajapakse

Emeritus Editors: Dr. C.G. Urugoda, Professor Colvin Goonaratna, Professor Janaka de Silva
and Dr. Anuruddha Abeygunasekera

Section Editors: Dr.B.J.C. Perera, Dr.Udaya Ranawaka and Professor Shalini Sri Ranganathan

Editorial Board: Prof. Carukshi Arambepola	Prof. Ranil Fernando	Dr. Renuka Jayatissa
Prof. Raveen Hanwella	Prof. Sarath Lekamwasam	Dr. Sachith Metananda
Prof. Ajith Nagahawatta	Dr. B.J.C. Perera	Prof. Shamini Prathapan
Prof. Udaya Ranawaka	Prof. S.H. Siribaddana	Prof. Shalini Sri Ranganathan

International Editorial Board:

Prof. Sabaratnam Arulkumaran	Prof. Zulfiqar Ahmed Bhutta	Prof. Andrew Dawson
Prof. Barbara Gastel	Prof. David Laloo	Prof. Kalle Hoppu
Prof. Ian Pearce	Prof. Peush Sahni	Prof. Anita KM Zaidi

Compiled by: Prof. A. Pathmeswaran

Period covered: 16 November 2019 to 15 November 2020

1. Editorial board membership

Prof Tiran Dias resigned from the editorial board in August 2020.

2. Board Meetings

The Editorial Board meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of the month. Ten meetings were held during the year. Average attendance at editorial board meetings was close to 70%. In addition, the members of the editorial board reviewed 192 abstracts submitted for the SLMA annual academic sessions. A summary of the events of CMJ are sent to the council periodically.

3. Journal

Four issues of the Journal were published during the year. The first two issues of 2020 were released as a double issue due to the prevailing conditions. A total of 22 articles have been published including 13 original articles. Ananda Press continued to print the Journal during the year under review.

Ten editorial board meetings were held where 131 articles were tabled and discussed. Forty-two articles were accepted for publication. The article acceptance rate was 32%. Average time between submission of an article and decision taken at the editorial board was 6 weeks. The processing fee per article is Rs. 3000/=.

4. Website

The CMJ can be accessed online through the SLMA website. Full article access is available from 2000 onwards. The Sri Lanka Journals Online website is maintained by the National Science Foundation. The PubMed abstract of the CMJ articles provides a link to the full text articles.

5. Online activities

The Twitter and Facebook accounts of the CMJ are being used to promote the Journal electronically. The Twitter account has 1200 followers to date. The Facebook page has 1092 followers.

6. Finances

The SLMA council has agreed to support the CMJ with an annual grant of Rs. 500,000 which will finance the running costs of the journal. The CMJ would like to acknowledge the support extended by the President and Council of the SLMA.

ISSN 0009-0875



THE CEYLON MEDICAL JOURNAL

ESTABLISHED 1887

Volume 64 Supplement 1, July 2020

The Sri Lanka Medical Association

133rd Anniversary International Medical Congress

Abstracts

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SRI LANKA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY

16. ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Chairperson : Professor Chandanie Wanigatunge (Medical)

Convener/ Secretary: Dr. Chathuri Suraweera (Medical)

Activities in relation to SLMA Objectives of the Committee

Objective	General	Specific
To advocate the reorientation of the health sector towards health promotion with a life cycle approach		
To engage the non-health sector in taking on equal responsibility in the prevention and reducing health inequities	To enhance research ethics capacity of those involved in biomedical research	To promote involvement of non-health sector associated persons in health-related research as members of the Ethics Review Committee
To promote healthy lifestyle and address major causative factors for NCDs among vulnerable populations through health promotion approach		
To enhance the capacity of medical professionals	To enhance research ethics capacity of those involved in biomedical research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide timely and comprehensive review of biomedical research protocols submitted for ethical approval To provide guidance and support to other ERCs to enhance their capacity in reviewing applications pertaining to ethical aspects of biomedical research
To play an advocacy role towards a comprehensive curative and preventive healthcare for the community		

Activities carried out in 2020

Twelve regular meetings and 4 special meetings for accelerated reviews for COVID-19 related protocols of the ERC were held from November 2019 to October 2020. 37 research proposals were submitted during the period from November 2019 to October 2020. 16 were granted approval (three from 2019 and 13 from 2020). Three proposals were removed from the agenda as the Principal Investigator did not respond despite repeated reminders. One protocol was rejected during this period.

Accelerated reviews were conducted on ten COVID-19 related research proposals of which six were granted approval and three were exempted from review. **The ERC of SLMA was one of the few ERCs to function during the period of COVID-19 lockdown with accelerated reviews conducted on COVID-19 related proposals and the decision given within a period of three to five days.**

Action plan for 2020

- Provide support to FERCSL and to look into the possibility of conducting a programme to grant local accreditation for the ethics review committees.
- To conduct training programmes for the newly joint SLMA-ERC members.

17. SRI LANKAN CLINICAL TRIALS REGISTRY

Chairperson : Professor Colvin Goonaratna
Convener : Dr. Udaya Ranawaka (Administrator)

Objectives of the committee

The overall objectives of the SLCTR are;

1. To establish and maintain a national registry of clinical trials that meets international standards.
2. To facilitate clinical trial registration by Sri Lankan researchers.
3. To create awareness on the need for, and the process of, clinical trial registration among the Sri Lankan scientific community.

Activities carried out during 2020

1. Twenty-four clinical trials were registered as of 20th November 2020 (Total 360 trials in the registry).
2. Total of 39 applications received and processed as of 20th November 2020.
3. SLCTR database and website were revised according to the new requirements of the WHO-ICTRP. Further database developments are ongoing.
4. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of SLCTR were revisited and updated.
5. The Ministry of Health Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine officially recognized SLCTR as the nationally operating clinical trials registry in Sri Lanka.

Action plan for 2021

1. Further develop the SLCTR web application according to updated WHO-ICTRP standards.
2. Provide a platform for results reporting of trials registered with the SLCTR.
3. Repeat the audit on the quality of clinical trials registration at the SLCTR.

18. REPORTS OF THE SLMA EXPERT COMMITTEES

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Chairperson : Dr. Ranjith Perera
Convener : Dr. Chamila Dalpathadu

Activities of the committee in relation to SLMA Objectives

Objective	General	Specific
To advocate the reorientation of the health sector towards health promotion with a life cycle approach		
To engage the non-health sector in taking on equal responsibility in the prevention and reducing health inequities		
To promote healthy lifestyle and address major causative factors for NCDs among vulnerable populations through health promotion approach		
To enhance the capacity of medical professionals	Committee has always been working with other colleges in providing CME to medical professionals.	Please see section below on activities carried out in 2020.
To play an advocacy role towards a comprehensive curative and preventive healthcare for the community	SLMA Guidelines and Information on Vaccines 7th Edition 2020 was completed with involvement of relevant professionals. Vaccine book was dedicated to the memory of late Professor Anura Weerasinghe	Grand round at NHSL for microbiology trainees & critical care trainees is carried out which was initiated through ECCD.

Activities carried out in 2019 Dec /2020

- A symposium titled "Measles: Will the recent global and local outbreaks affect our elimination status?" was held on the 5th of December 2019.
- A symposium on "Infections in the elderly: the challenges" was held on 9th January 2020
- ECCD, in collaboration with Media Committee, organized a symposium titled "**Novel Coronavirus Infection (nCoV), Wuhan, China : Are we ready to face it?**" on 30th January 2020
- ECCD, in collaboration with Media Committee, organized an expert panel discussion (Q & A) via a webinar titled "**Clarify your doubts on Covid -19**", On 20th March 2020

Action plan for 2021

- To organize symposia on currently important and relevant topics for capacity building and continuous medical education purposes of medical professionals.
- To explore the possibility of long term collaboration with an organization /institution to obtain assistance for CPE sessions.
- To initiate activities targeting comprehensive curative and preventive healthcare for the community.
- Improve and expand the series of CD's on health related topics which can be used as education material in hospitals.

CORE GROUP ON COMMUNICATION IN HEALTHCARE

Chairperson : Prof. Rasnayaka Mudiyanse
Convener : Dr. Amali Dalpatadu

The Expert Committee was initiated in December 2018 as the Core Group on Communication in Healthcare and was later renamed as the Expert Committee on Communication in Healthcare.

COVID-19 pandemic affected most of the activities planned for this year. However, the committee held 08 meetings from November 2019. Following main activities were undertaken by the committee:

1. Communication Skills Training Programme in 10 Hospitals in collaboration with the Ministry of Health was planned to be held in January 2021.
2. Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) to evaluate the communication skills gained through the Communication Skills Training Programme was planned for June 2021.
3. Narrative Competition for medical and allied health students was scheduled to be held in April 2021.
4. Communication handbook – A 50-page handbook to supplement communication training was completed. It will be sent as a PDF to the participants of the communication skills programme.
5. The annual conference on Communication in Healthcare was Postponed to 2021
6. Initial discussions and planning for a trainer training programme to enrich the allied sciences undergraduate curriculum in liaison with the ministry of health was held with the stakeholders.
7. Initial Discussions were held regarding midwife's communication skills training with the relevant authorities of the Ministry of health
8. Council meetings were held at SLMC with some members joining via zoom due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic.
9. Online Training Programme on Communication Skills Development for COVID-19 Frontline Workforce



Organized by Sri Lanka Medical Association In Collaboration with Ministry of Health and National Operation Center for Prevention of COVID-19 Outbreak



Online Training Programme on Communication Skills Development for COVID-19 Frontline Workforce

OPENING CEREMONY AND INAUGURATION

16th November 2020
7 PM Onwards



**Lieutenant General
Shavendra Silva**
Head, National Operation Center for
Prevention of COVID-19 Outbreak,
Chief of Defence staff and Commander
of the Sri Lanka Army



**Dr Asela
Gunawardena**
Director General of Health
Services



**Professor Indika
Karunathilake**
President, SLMA



**Professor Rasnayake M.
Mudiyanse**
Professor in Paediatrics,
Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya

WEBCAST LIVE FROM WIJERAMA HOUSE



Join us on Facebook Live
<https://www.facebook.com/SLMAonline/>



Registration Link
<http://tiny.cc/uvn4tz>



ETHICS

Chairperson : Dr. Preethi Wijegoonewardene
Convener : Dr. Surantha Perera

The ethics committee held seven meetings during the year. The main activities undertaken by the committee were as follows:

- Networking with outstation clinical societies by conducting ethics related sessions at SLMA regional meetings.
- Contributing to the formation of guidelines on the ethical issues at end of life care. A meeting will be held in the SLMA with the participation of stakeholders to take it forward
- Contributing to the establishment of National Policy on Organ and Tissue Transplantation of Sri Lanka. It was discussed in three key areas, i.e. Kidney transplantation from deceased, altruistic donors' eligibility and Guidelines on allocation protocol.
- It was decided to organize a meeting with the Secretary of Health and DGHS to promote the establishment of Hospital Ethics Committees and to develop a policy decision at national level.
- Continuing the collaborative work with the Sri Lanka Chamber of the Pharmaceutical Industry (SLCPI) on furthering ethical medicinal drug promotion and ethical behaviour of prescribers.
- Working with the SLMA Medicinal Drugs Committee to revise the existing "SLMA ethical criteria for promotion of medicinal drugs and devices
- Plan to develop a document addressing ethics involved in controlling C19 pandemic and disseminate it to the media and the membership
- Plan to produce a digital book on "Ethics in practice" compiling the selected orations and presidential speeches on ethics related themes which will be useful for the membership to read.

HEALTH INNOVATIONS, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Chairperson : Prof. Kumara Mendis
Convener : Dr. Sashika Sandaruwanie

The Health, Innovation, Research, and Practice Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) organized SLMA Innovation Awards – 2020, under the theme of "Health Innovations for tomorrow", a milestone event of SLMA.

Applicants were requested to submit abstracts describing their health innovations along with a video clip under the 5 categories of School, General Public, University, other Institutions, and Medical Doctors.

These Abstracts and video clips were evaluated by an external and internal panel of evaluators comprising of experts in relevant medical and non-medical fields. The enthusiasm for innovation among university students was evident in the high quality of the projects submitted by them. Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals were awarded for the best innovations in each category.

The Awards Ceremony of the Health Innovation Awards – 2020 was held on 25th July 2020 at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium of SLMA.

The SLMA is committed to encouraging all innovators by making the Innovation Awards an annual event. Winners' video presentations published in the SLMA YouTube channel.



HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Chairperson : Dr. Ruvaiz Haniffa
Convener : Dr. P.D. Koggalage

General objective -

To assist in strengthening SLMA in its role of influencing health policy and support to play the advocacy role towards a comprehensive curative and preventive healthcare for the Sri Lankan community

Specific objectives -

1. To lead the health policy debate to influence or change government decisions which SLMA believes may not be in country's best interests;
2. To respond to issues in the health sector through the provision of a wide range of expert resources by collaborating with Professional Colleges, Ministry of Health, Finance and other health related organisations and stakeholders including the private sector;
3. To collect and analyse data and information to support evidence based advocacy;
4. To support implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through enhanced intra and inter sectoral cooperation;
5. To collaborate with other expert committees of SLMA in promoting health.

Activities carried out in 2020

The HMC met on five occasions up to November 2020 and the following activities were undertaken by the HMC up to this date.

1. **Issue of obtaining 'Informed Written Consent' before Surgical procedures in the state sector hospitals.**
 The HMC noted with concern the lack of seriousness in obtaining informed written consent from patients undergoing surgical procedures in the state sector hospitals. It was noted that a 'Blanket consent' was obtained often without proper information being provided to the patient about the specific of the surgical procedure, the risks involved and possible complications and expected outcome prognosis.
 As the SLMA Ethics Committee has taken up this issue in their agenda, the Ethics Committee was informed to forward the prepared Consent Forms to the Director General of Health Services/ MoH for implementation.
2. **'Suraksha' Insurance Scheme for school children**
 The members of the HMC have noted this scheme as a waste of government money. Hence, the committee decided to discuss this issue further with the Hon. Minister of Education and the Hon. Minister of Finance (Prime Minister) of the present government. However, this was not possible due to the existing COVID-19 pandemic.
3. **'Career Guidance Seminar for Junior Medical Officers - 2020'**
 The 28th Annual Career Guidance Seminar of SLMA for Junior Medical Officers was successfully concluded on Sunday, the 30th August 2020 from 8.00am to 1.45pm at the Professor N.D.W. Lionel Memorial Auditorium, SLMA.

MEDIA

Chairperson : Dr. Ruvaiz Haniffa
Convener : Dr. Hasini Banneheke

General objective -

- **“Cosmetics, plastics and processed food: Are we living or killing ourselves?”**
 on 20th February 2020, to mark the World Cancer Day (falls on 4th February)
- Effects of Micro plastics & Teflon on human body: Dr. Sajith Edirisinghe
- Safety of cosmetics and health related issues: Dr. Sriyani Samaraweera
- Chemical/preservatives used for food: Dr. Hementa Herath
- Good and bad of cosmetics: Dr. Indira Kahawita
- **“Novel Coronavirus Infection (nCoV), Wuhan, China: Are we ready to face it?”**
 On 30th January 2020, Co-organized with the Expert Committee on Communicable Diseases
 - Virological & diagnostic aspects of nCoV
 Dr. Saranga Sumathipala, Consultant Virologist, Teaching Hospital, Anuradhapura
 - An update on current global situation of nCoV
 Dr. Sudath Samaraweera, Chief Epidemiologist, Ministry of Health
 - Clinical signs and management of nCoV patients
 Dr. Ananda Wijewickrema, Consultant Physician, National Institute of Infectious Diseases
 - Preventive measures taken in Sri Lanka at points of Entry
 Dr. S.M. Arnold, Director / Quarantine, Ministry of Health
 - Role of World Health Organization
 Dr. Sapumal Danapala, WHO Country Office
 - Role of International Organization for Migration
- **Clarify your doubts on COVID – 19:** An expert panel discussion (q & a) via a webinar on 20th March 2020
 Co-organized with the Expert Committee on Communicable Diseases and Council of the SLMA
 Resource persons:
 - Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama, Consultant Physician, National Institute of Infectious Diseases
 - Dr. Sudath Samaraweera, Chief Epidemiologist, Ministry of Health
 - Professor Neelika Malavige, Professor in Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, USJP
 - Dr. Rohini Wadanambi, Consultant Microbiologist, Lanka Hospital

Regular media committee meetings were held.

The SLMA Media Committee also supported the general media advisory of the SLMA.

The annual SLMA Award for Excellence in Media Communication 2020 was organized this year introducing more categories and expanding to the scope to suit the current context. For this, the SLMA called for entries from all media personnel who have contributed to the print or electronic media on any health or environment related topic during 01st July 2019 to 30th June 2020. The scheme was opened to media personnel (journalists/ producers/ directors) including professionals and free-lancers from all three languages. New guidelines for applicants, judges/reviewers were prepared. Tradition was to give away these awards at the Foundation session. However it was decided to have a separate award ceremony to give away the medals and certificates with a keynote speech by an eminent person from the media and communication sector. This year we invited Dr. Praneeth Abeyasundera from University of Sri Jayewardenepura and the ceremony was held on 24th November at the auditorium of the SLMA.

MEDICINAL DRUGS

Chairperson : Prof. Priyadarashani Galappatthy
Convener : Prof. Pradeepa Jayawardane

Main objective of the committee is to promote rational and appropriate use of medicinal drugs and ensure safety of medication use.

Activities carried out in 2020

1. Therapeutic update lectures

MDC organized the lunchtime lectures for the 7th consecutive year to update knowledge on therapeutics and rational use of medicines.

Though it was initially planned to have six updates for this year, due to COVID-19 global pandemic we were able to hold only 3 updates. All the lectures are uploaded to the SLMA website.

The updates held and speakers are as follows:

1. Non-Alcoholic Steatohepatitis by Prof Anuradha Dassanayake on 28/02/2020

2. Therapeutic update on “Adult epilepsies” by Dr Kishara Goonaratne held on 30/09/2020
3. Update on Vasculitis by Dr Gunendrika will be held on 20/11/2020

2. Development of Medication Safety National Action Plan

The National Action Plan for Medication Safety in Sri Lanka initially drafted by Prof. Priyadarshini Galappaththy, Chairperson of the MDC was submitted to the Directorate of Healthcare Quality and safety (HQS) of the Ministry of Health for discussion among stakeholders. Altogether 6 workshops were held at the Directorate HQS with funding from WHO to finalise the plan with participation of members of MDC and other stakeholders. Plans were to launch it in 2020 but it got delayed due to the Covid 19 pandemic. MDC of SLMA was a key stakeholder in providing technical expertise. The Directorate HQS will launch finalised Medication Safety Action Plan in 2021 and MDC will be participating in the activities proposed.

3. Pharmacy Sales Assistants Workshop

Plans have been made to hold this on 22/11/2020 at the MRI auditorium. The programme and tentative the resource persons are as follows.

- Introduction – Prof. Gita Fernando/Prof. Priyadarshani Galappaththy
- Reading a prescription: How to avoid the errors by Prof. Priyadarshani Galappaththy
- Good pharmacy practice by Dr. Uthpali Mannaperuma
- Implementing the recommendations by NMRA on pricing of medicines by Prof. Asita De Silva/Dr. Palitha Abeykoon
- Challenges faced in dispensing electronic prescriptions - President Pharmacy owner's association
- Drug interactions and how to prevent them as a pharmacist – Prof. Nirmala Wijekoon
- Patient counseling/advice on medications – Prof. Pradeepa Jayawardane
- Preventing the spread of COVID: what can the pharmacists do – Dr. Shirani Chandrasiri, Microbiologist
- Panel discussion to answer questions by pharmacists on challenges in dispensing

4. Patient information leaflets

The patient information leaflets on following topics will be prepared and published online at the SLMA website.

- Depression - Prof Raveen Hanwella
- Vitamin D therapy– Dr Sachith Abayaratne
- Drugs in Epilepsy – Dr Kishara Gunaratne
- Hypertension- Dr Sarath Gamini de Silva

Action plan for 2021

- a. MDC will continue to have therapeutic updates for 2021.
- b. Provide leadership in implementing Medication Safety National Action Plan
- c. Prevention of AMR by improving prescribing practices
- d. Patient education on “Misconceptions regarding use of medicinal drugs” will be addressed by preparing “Patient Information Leaflets which will be published online at the SLMA website.
- e. Improving knowledge of Pharmacists/ Pharmacy sales Assistants through workshops

NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Chairperson	:	Dr. J. B. Jayawardena
Convener	:	Dr. Chathuranga Ranasinghe

Background

The expert subcommittee on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) has been active and operational since 2004 which has given leadership to SLMA in playing a pioneering advocacy role in the field of NCDs; in policy formulation, strategic planning, and development of national action plans in support of the Ministry of Health (MoH) and other relevant ministries and stakeholders.

Activities carried out in 2020:

1. The NIROGI Lanka project

The flagship project of SLMA, continuing for the 11th year (2009-2020) completed its phase III (2016-2020) funded by the World Diabetes Foundation (WDF) in collaboration with Sri Lanka Debates and Cardiovascular Initiative which was independently evaluated. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with Rotary International Sri Lanka for the future activities. Health promotion is currently continued under the “NIROGI Diviya” component in rural and suburban communities in 6 districts, 18 MOH areas, >200 settings covering communities, schools and workplaces reaching >10,000 families. A novel interactive online health promotion is currently conducted during the COVID 19 period via social media platforms.

 - Health promotion material and processes developed.
 - 500 short messages (3 languages), 45 voice messages and 50 video messages were developed to be disseminated via mobile, social media, main media platforms in collaboration with Health Promotion Bureau MoH.
 - NIROGI website (further developed), Facebook page and Youtube channel was launched.
 - Happy calendar and Active Lanka T shirts were distributed to settings.
 - Three (3) books on NIROGI 1) NIROGI evaluation booklet, 2) NIROGI Diviya Lessons Learnt (2009-2016). 3) NIROGI Lanka and leaflets published.

- Capacity building programs conducted.
 - “Active Lanka” project was launched.
 - Development of a central data processing and monitoring mobile APP was initiated.
 - Memorandum of Understanding with BEAT, Samson Industries (Pvt) Limited (DSI) on developing a ‘Diabetes Prescription shoe’ to the diabetes patients is planned to be signed as an extension of the NIROGI PAADA component.
 - Scientific communications published in conferences and newsletters.
2. The subcommittee was actively involved in providing expertise, coordinating international laboratories to testing, influencing improvement of methods on testing of the imported milk powder to Sri Lanka. Communications and recommendations were made to the Minister of Trade and Commerce and in official reports to the speaker/ parliamentary committees.
 3. Expertise and voluntary services were provided to the Coconut Development Authority (CDA) Sri Lanka on developing a monitoring, evaluation and certification (certificate and logo) system to provide good quality coconut oil to the country.
 4. Providing support to analyze sugar, fat and microbiology of common food products available in the market through the Industrial Technology Institute (ITI) to guide policy decisions.
 5. Communications were made to relevant authorities to stop single cigarette sales to reduce harmful tobacco consumption.
 6. Communications initiated with the Ministry of Agriculture for health related scientific input on home gardening.
 7. Representation as a guideline development committee member of the 2020 WHO global physical activity and sedentary behavior guidelines WHO Geneva and coordinating plan of adopting in Sri Lanka.
 8. Webinar on “Alternative drugs used in NCDs in Sri Lanka and scientific basis” was held.

PALLIATIVE AND END OF LIFE CARE TASK FORCE

Chairperson : Dr. Dilhar Samaraweera
Convenor 1 : Dr. Udayangani Ramadasa
Convenor 2 : Dr. Sankha Randenikumara
Members : Representing all relevant Colleges and Associations

The Palliative and End of Life Care Task Force (PCTF) initiated as a ‘core group’ of the NCD sub-committee of the SLMA at the end of year 2016. In 2018 the Task Force was formally recognized as an independent expert committee of the SLMA.

1. Monthly Task Force meetings

Monthly meetings of the PCTF are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month with approximately 20 participants. Only 4 meetings have been convened in 2020 due to the prevailing pandemic situation of the country. Usually the progress of the activities of the previous month and the future plans of the Task Force are discussed and decisions are made with extra meetings on important matters when aroused. Various professionals, both medical and non-medical, representing multiple disciplines including legal fraternity and journalists attend the meetings.

2. End of Life Care Guideline Development

A dedicated committee of professionals from multiple specialties, headed by Prof. Thashi Chang, has been formulating the much needed Guidelines for End of life care for the past several months. Its final draft is currently under discussion after receiving legal opinion from Mr Yasantha Kodagoda (then Additional Solicitor General, now the President of Appeal Courts of Sri Lanka).

3. Palliative Care Manual: A Guide for Healthcare Professionals – 2nd Edition

The first symptom control manual was published in October 2017 as the first major output of the PCTF. It was developed by a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals, representing various Colleges and Associations, with the intention of assisting health professionals in the symptom management of palliative patients.

Compiling of the 2nd Edition of the manual has been already done with printing pending. The second edition is more comprehensive as it encompasses cancer palliative care as well. Regular meetings of the Editorial board and authors have been conducted during this period. The Task Force hopes to publish the 2nd Edition within the year 2020.

4. Contribution to Sessions, meetings and webinars

PCTF members contributed to SLMA Annual sessions, SLMA regional meetings, SLMA monthly clinical meetings and meetings by other professional Colleges and associations (CCP, SLAGM, PCASL) as resource persons.

PREVENTION OF ROAD TRAFFIC CRASHES

Co-Chairpersons : Prof. Samath D. Dharmaratne and Dr. Clifford Perera
Secretary : Dr. Thushara Matiwala

Introduction

The Expert Committee on PRTCs (PRTC) met six times during the year 2020 (three times on ZOOM).

Activities conducted by the Expert Committee on PRTCs during 2019

1. Continuation of the collaboration initiated in 2019 with the College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka
2. Collaborations with the Rotary and Lions clubs initiated in the past continued to participate and get involved in the activities of the committee
3. Organizing an awareness program on injury prevention at the SLMA auditorium for School children where our Brand Ambassador, Mr Dilantha Malagamuwa conducted a presentation on Future Drivers.
4. Organizing a stakeholder meeting titled "SAFE Sri Lanka: Road Safety Challenge 2020 Symposium "on January 18, 2020 from 8.00 am to 1.00 pm at the auditorium of the Sri Lanka Medical Association, where a multitude of relevant stakeholders participated.
5. The proposal for the establishment of a Presidential Task Force for the prevention and control of road traffic crashes in Sri Lanka was presented to the President, during the organization of the above conference.
6. Continued to have discussions with the media organizations, politicians and other relevant stakeholders on road safety. Several media talks and paper articles were presented and published by members of the committee and the President of the SLMA.
7. Our work in collaboration with the Rotary clubs, on road safety continued in 2020. The Rotary Club of Sri Jayawardenapura and the Rotary Club of Kandy Metropolitan participated actively in this initiative.
8. New collaboration was initiated with the Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya, on the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning in the prevention and control of road crashes. Dr Parakrama Ekenayake, Senior Lecturer, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya made a presentation on their use of this technology in road safety in Kandy and the committee was of the opinion that this method can be used in Sri Lanka as a whole.

On behalf of the Expert Committee on Prevention of Road Traffic Crashes, I and the members of the committee wish to thank Prof. Indika Karunathillake, the President of the SLMA and Dr. Sumithra Tissera, the Secretary of the SLMA for the support and encouragement given to us in the organization of these meetings. In addition, a special show of appreciation to the office staff of the SLMA, and all the Council Members for their support and encouragement.

Summary

The Expert Committee on PRTC was able to initiate several collaborations, both national and international, during the year. We believe these collaborations will help to highlight the role of the SLMA in the prevention and control of this important public health issue, during the next year and the future.



RESEARCH EVALUATION

Chairperson : Prof. M. C. Weerasinghe
Secretary : Dr. Sajith Edirisinghe

Six applied for the CNAPT Award, two for the GR Handy award, three for the SLMA Research Grant, four for the GlaxoWellcome, four for the Fairmed and five for the Prof. Wilfred Perera Travel Grant.

The Fairmed, GlaxoWellcome and GR Handy awards were not given as the reviewers felt that the research papers sent did not match brief on the Grant and was not up to the expected standard.

Prof. Wilfred Perera Travel grant was awarded to doctors, similar to last year.

Many Consultants supported in reviewing the abstracts, some within the council and others outside the council. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our reviewers.

The committee planned to conduct the series of research data analysis workshops using SPSS software, workshops to increase the skills of citation and references in an article using EndNote and few workshops related to research data presentations using GraphPad Prism. Unfortunately due to the 2nd wave of the COVID 19, the workshops were withheld and scheduled for the next year.

SNAKE BITE

Chairpersons (Joint) : Prof. S. A. M. Kularatne & Prof. Kolitha Sellahewa
Secretary : Dr. Malik Fernando

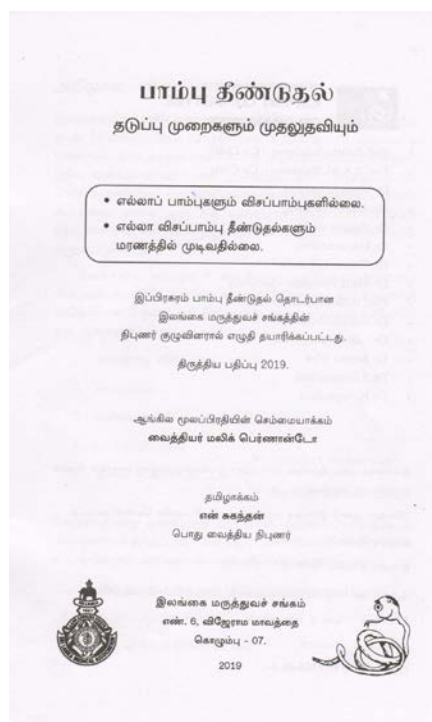
No formal meetings of the Snakebite Committee were held during the year 2020.

The Snakebite Prevention and First Aid booklets continue to be available on the website. Dr. Suganthan, on his own initiative, secured sponsorship and has printed the Tamil version for distribution among Tamil speaking citizens in the area where he works. The Secretary is in consultation with the Wildlife & Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka, Youth Wing, to print these booklets in all three languages for distribution to school children during their awareness programmes.

A number of requests have been received for hard copies of the Snakebite Management Guidelines. Help in obtaining funding to have these printed is necessary.

The Regional Snake-bite Prevention and Control Plan of Action

The Draft of this document prepared on behalf of the Regional Office for South-East Asia has been received. Prof. Kolitha Sellahewa served on the team that produced this document. A review of this document, drafting a suitable action plan for Sri Lanka and getting the involvement of the Ministry of Health to engage in its implementation will be foremost in the programme of work for 2021.



SUICIDES PREVENTION (ECSP)

Chairperson : Professor Thilini Rajapakse
Convener : Dr. Anula Wijesundere
Secretary : Dr. Ruwan Ferdinando

Suicide is an important public health problem in Sri Lanka. Worldwide, there has been a call to reduce the substantial mortality and morbidity burden associated with suicide and suicidal behaviour, through national and local strategies.

In responding to this need, the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) in 2019 convened the Expert Committee on Suicide Prevention (initially named as the Suicide Prevention Task Force of the SLMA) to identify solutions. The mandate of the Expert Committee includes identification of factors that contribute to high rate of suicide and self-harm in Sri Lanka, developing policy documents on the prevention of suicide and self-harm and providing a framework to address long-term issues, as well as identifying relevant stakeholders and advocating for preventive measures.

The expert committee completed the document on “Suicide Prevention in Sri Lanka: Recommendations for Action” in December 2019, which is now published. To date, there has been no nationally coordinated plan for prevention of suicide and self-harm, in Sri Lanka. The ECSP publication “Prevention of Suicide in Sri Lanka: Recommendations for Action” compiles and presents multiple, evidence based approaches for suicide prevention relevant to Sri Lanka, in order to support national level, strategic preventive measures for this country. The document entails a detailed description of goals and measures to combat the problem in a practical and holistic manner and encompasses the World Health Organization recommendations on the prevention of suicide.

The first copies of this publication was handed over to His Excellency the President Gotabhaya Rajapaksha and to key officials of the Ministry of Health, to discuss strategic actions to be taken in this regard. The issue of prevention of suicide will be taken up as an agenda item in the future, at the meetings of the National Health Development Committee.

The ECSP recently represented the SLMA at the Joint Regional Meeting organized by the Kandy Society of Medicine (KSM) and the SLMA, held on the 18th of October 2020. During this virtual session Prof Thilini Rajapakse of the ECSP made a presentation titled, “Suicide and self-harm in Sri Lanka: Can it be prevented?” The ECSP also holds regular meetings with its members, and at present are discussing next steps to be taken regarding advocating for suicide prevention strategies at a national level. Planned next steps of the ECSP includes linking with the Mental Health Directorate of the Ministry of Health, and also liaising with the media representatives regarding minimizing inappropriate reporting on suicides and self-harm in this country.



TOBACCO, ALCOHOL AND ILLICIT DRUGS

Chairperson : Prof. Narada Warnasuriya
Convenor : Dr. Jayamal De Silva

Members

Dr. Manoj Fernando	Dr. Anula Wijesundere	Dr. Hemantha Amarasinghe
Dr. Mahesh Rajasuriya	Dr. Nadeeka Chandraratne	Dr. Sajeeva Ranaweera
Dr. Nayana Dhanapala	Dr. Sameera Hewage	

Report presented by Dr. Jayamal de Silva

1. COVID-19 Related Activities

- Opposing the decision of the Ministry of Finance to commence sales of alcohol when the curfew was partially lifted:**
 The sale of tobacco and alcohol products were prohibited throughout the country during the quarantine curfew from March to May 2020. However, there were many moves to persuade the government to resume the sales of these substances. The Ministry of Finance announced in the third week of April that alcohol sales will commence. The committee actively opposed this move by:
 - Appealing in writing to the President to defer permission to sell alcohol on the 20th of April. This appeal was based on several grounds- People gathering at alcohol selling points, spending whatever little money they have on alcohol, increase domestic violence, child abuse and road accidents and the possibility of alcohol-centred gatherings at homes. It was also pointed out that Scientific studies have also shown that the economic costs of alcohol in Sri Lanka far exceed the revenue collected.
 - Calling and directly lobbied the Presidential Secretariat, Prime Minister's office and the Excise Commissioner
 - Speaking to six very influential Buddhist Priests and His Eminence the Cardinal, requesting them to speak directly to the highest political authorities. Members also contacted the high level advisors of the President and the Task Force for Economic Revival on this issue.
 - Raising the issue directly with Director-General of Health Service and the President of GMOA
- The President, after considering many facts of the issue, decided to defer allowing sales of alcohol. Following this decision, the Committee thanked the President in writing.
- Opposing the attempt by the Department of Excise to resume sales of alcohol:**
 The Department of Excise held a press conference and called for allowing alcohol sales. They used unsubstantiated arguments that included increasing use of illegal alcohol. The Committee issued a response to the media which was used extensively in an Editorial of the Daily Mirror, 29th of April 2020, entitled "War against Covid 19; Is the Excise Dept. drunk?"
- Appeal to the President not to allow the sale of alcohol until the country returns to normal:**
 The committee again appealed to HE the President on 25th of May to discontinue sale of alcohol until normality is restored. The reasons given for the request included health issues as well as social issues such as disregarding rules on distancing and spending on alcohol when many families have lost a substantial amount of income.

2. Activities opposing relaxation on laws on cannabis in Sri Lanka

A sustained campaign was conducted to relax the current laws on cannabis in Sri Lanka from the latter parts of 2019. Different politicians, pressure groups, companies and individuals were active on this campaign that included media statements, advocacy meetings, social media campaigns and individual meetings with policy makers. Media Statements by some Ministers indicated that the government was seriously considering this request.

The Committee undertook many activities on its own and also supported other organization that were working to prevent this from happening. Following is a summary of what was done.

- Issuing a Media Statement that was taken up in Parliament. A strong Media Statement was issued against such a move outlining the potential consequences including possible establishment of a cannabis industry in Sri Lanka. This was also distributed to individual members of Parliament. Questions were raised in Parliament quoting this Statement. The Prime Minister answering the questions issued a statement that such a relaxation of laws will not take place. His official media statement too contained issues raised in SLMA Media Statement.
- Individual lobbying Individual Members of the Committee undertook to speak to different stakeholders of issue. Very high ranking Buddhist and Catholic Clergy was individually met by Members. Discussions were held with Authorities of Ayurveda Department and Ayurvedic Professionals. Individual Members also discussed this issue with the Ministers in Charge of Ayurveda and Pharmaceutical Drugs and also the Chairman of the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board. Articles were written and published in the Island and Daily Mirror summarizing the evidence against any form of legalization of cannabis.
- Press Conference to oppose legalization of cannabis cultivation in Sri Lanka. The SLMA participated in the press conference organized by the Sri Lanka Temperance Association to protest against attempts to legalize cultivation of cannabis in Sri Lanka on 22nd September which received wide publicity in the print and electronic media. Very high ranking Buddhist Priests and His Eminence the Cardinal also participated in this meeting. Three members of the Committee were also in the panel of speakers. The Stance taken by SLMA was strongly presented by the Members as well as the religious dignitaries who were previously briefed by the Members of the Committee.

- Seminar Organized by the Organization of Professional Association (OPA) on cannabis: The Committee participated in a seminar organized by the Organization of Professional Associations (OPA) on different aspects of legalization of cannabis on 29th of September. A wide range of professionals from different disciplines participated at this meeting and made presentations related to cannabis. The SLMA was represented by President Elect, and four Members of the Committee including the Past President. Those representing SLMA made presentations on the different aspects of cannabis use, harms, social and economic costs and how it is being promoted now in Sri Lanka

3. Specific interventions on tobacco and alcohol

- The alcohol industry attempts to relax alcohol advertising restrictions: The alcohol industry sought relaxation of the current prohibition of all forms of alcohol advertising. This was to “inform” the public on an CSR initiative to recycle alcohol containers. The Committee wrote to NATA requesting not to allow this to happen, giving the scientific background on why it should not be allowed. NATA too took the same stance, and the government did not allow it to happen.
- Opposing corporate tax reduction for tobacco and alcohol tax industries: In January 2020, it was announced that the Corporate Taxes on tobacco and alcohol companies were reduced to 28% from 40%. The committee issued a press release appealing that it should not be done as it would increase corporate profits which in turn will be used to further their market. This tax proposal was subsequently withdrawn, following consideration of many related aspects by the government.

4. Training

- The Centre for Combating Tobacco (CCT) of the University of Colombo initiated an Online Training Course on Tobacco Control. This was aimed for those in Sri Lanka as well as other South-Asian Countries. SLMA is a technical partner of CCT. Several Members of the Committee were invited to provide online teaching modules for this course, a task which was successfully completed.
- The Committee also provided technical support to the NCD Unit of the Ministry of Health for designing and conducting training for health workers on tobacco Cessation.
- It also is providing technical inputs for a training curricula on smokeless tobacco use.

5. Collaborations

- Collaboration with the Presidential Task Force on Economic Revival: Three Members of the Committee were invited as resource persons for formulating a community level programme for addressing poverty by the Tasks Force for Economic Revival established at the Prime Minister’s Office. This process was successfully completed
- Collaboration with the Institute of Policy Studies: Members of the Committee were invited as resource persons for formulating projects and supporting implementation on a tobacco control project with the Institute of Policy Studies (which is an agency under the Ministry of Finance). Tobacco Taxation, Cessation and Policy Interventions were the main areas of this initiative, which was completed and the findings disseminated.

6. Academic Sessions

- The Committee conducted a session entitled “Tobacco, Alcohol and other Substance Abuse” at the Colombo Medical Faculty 150th Anniversary Academic Sessions on 13th February. Policy and legislation, prevention and treatment and management at both community and clinic settings were discussed. It was Co-Chaired by a Member of the Committee and three Members of the Committee were panelists.



SLMA SRI LANKA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Attempts to legalize cannabis cultivation in Sri Lanka

There have been several news items and social media posts concerning cannabis, advocating legalization of its cultivation. The reason given is the scarcity of cannabis for production of some Ayurvedic medicines.

Recently, a prominent member of the clergy and the Minister of Indigenous Medicine Promotion, Rural and Ayurvedic Hospitals Development and Community Health supported such a policy in public. Similar sentiments were expressed by the previous Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine last year.

We are very concerned about these public statements promoting cannabis cultivation. News papers reported that even a Cabinet Paper on the subject was presented in 2019, according to the Daily News of 2nd February 2019.

In parallel, many social media posts and videos promote cannabis use as a liberating traditional cultural practice of Sri Lanka with health benefits. We have also been notified that there is a proposal by a private company to manufacture cannabis based oils, in collaboration with the State Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Corporation, which requires official permission to cultivate cannabis in Sri Lanka.

This disclosure has come at time where there is an immense pressure internationally to legalize cannabis for recreational use.

Cannabis cultivation and use is prohibited by the Poisons, Opium and Dangerous Drugs Ordinance of Sri Lanka. It is also classified as a dangerous drug in international conventions dealing with drugs – The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

However, permission has been given for its medical use in Sri Lanka, as it is component of some Ayurvedic medicines. There is a long established system in place for cannabis to be provided to licenced Ayurvedic Practitioners by the Ayurvedic Department and the Government Administrative Network. Therefore there is no requirement to legalize the cultivation of Cannabis.

If there is a shortfall in supply to the Ayurvedic practitioners, the government can look at options such as importing the shortfall, under very strict conditions. If cultivation is allowed, there will most certainly be leakage of cannabis to the general public.

Only two out of over 193 UN member countries and some states or districts in a few other countries has legalized recreational use of cannabis.

What followed such legalization is the establishment of large cannabis production and retail companies that are now aiming to become multinationals. Powerful multinational tobacco and alcohol companies have already become partners of such companies investing billions of dollars in them. Young people in North America is already using cannabis through electronic smoking devices. The alcohol industry and the beverage industry is already experimenting with cannabis-based products.

These commercial products use genetically modified cannabis plants or synthetic chemicals similar to the ones in cannabis plants to ensure that very high levels of these chemicals can be ingested by the users. When multinationals move in or commercial cannabis cultivation occur there will be no room for tradition varieties of the plant, as imagined by those promoting cannabis as a local product in Sri Lanka.

We should also be concerned because cannabis is already the most widely used psychoactive product in Sri Lanka and the world. It is also the most commonly used illegal drug by young people around the world. Despite claims of medical benefits, there are only a few illnesses that respond to cannabis-based medicines. Other medicines for such ailments are already available and is prescribed widely.

Just because some chemical in a substance has some effect in treating an illness does not mean that that recreational use of this substance should be allowed to be promoted. For example, extracts of the poppy plant and its chemical derivatives are widely used as pain relieving medicines around the world. This does not mean that heroin, which is also derived from the same plant should be promoted for recreational use by entire populations.

On the contrary, there are many health harms of cannabis including mental disorders such as depression and schizophrenia, cannabis use disorders and serious lung ailments. It also affects brain development of adolescents. It has also been associated with self-harm and suicide as well as road traffic accidents which already major killers in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankans do not deserve to be cursed with more suicides and road accidents.

We will see also see these cannabis-related conditions increase as well as other illnesses emerging when high concentrations of cannabis-based chemicals in commercial products are ingested by a larger number of people.

We, therefore, request earnestly from the government of Sri Lanka to take all steps to reduce consumption of cannabis in Sri Lanka, and not allow relaxation of measures currently in place to do so.

Sri Lanka is already excessively burdened with harms of alcohol and tobacco, which are legal addictive substances and heroin which is illegal. We should not add to this massive burden. If any form of further legalization of cannabis happens in the country it will be a major victory for an emerging killer industry and a resounding social and economic defeat to all Sri Lankans.

Ch. J. W. H.

Prof. Narada Warnasuriya
Chairperson
SLMA Expert Committee on Tobacco, Alcohol
and Illicit Drugs

Prof. Indika Karunathilake
HNBIS (COL) Director (JG), MMBMS (JG), JHEA (JG), FOME (SL), ROSAPAKO (SL), PRCP (JG)
Professor in Medical Education, University of Colombo
President
Sri Lanka Medical Association

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Chairperson : Prof. Sampatha Gunawardena
Convenor : Prof. Anuruddhi Edirisinghe

The new Chairperson and Secretary was appointed in committee and was appointed in August 2020.

The first meeting was held on the 30th of September 2020 face to face at the SLMA Council room. The Zoom meeting was held on the 23rd of October.

Meetings will be conducted via zoom every 4th Friday of the month.

1. Breast Cancer awareness- October
Dr. Janaki Vidanapathirana briefed the members regarding the breast cancer awareness programme conducted by the National Cancer Control Programme as well as Aayu plus social media campaign.
2. 16- day Activism against Gender Based Violence - November
Prof. Edirisinghe will be launching a book based on the research on 'unnatural female death' conducted by the University of Kelaniya together with the UNFPA during the 16 day activism of GBV. She will share this publication on SLMA website.
3. Concept paper on mental health issues related to GBV during COVID 19 was prepared by Dr. Aruni Hapangama and Dr. Aruni De Silva. Medio legal inputs will be given by Prof. Edirisinghe and Dr. Gunasekara.
4. Concept note to be prepared by Dr. Sepali Kottegoda considering the present COVID-19 situation and increased usage of cyberspace by the public which is expected to create an environment where cyber harassment is increased.

19. CENTRAL CPD (CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

Chairperson : Prof. Kosala Marambe
Convenor : Dr. Wasana Jayarathne

Members

Prof. Indika Karunathilake Dr. Murali Vallipuranathan Dr. Sudath Samaraweera
 Dr. Umanga Sooriyarachchi

This report was compiled by Prof. Kosala Marambe

The new CPD committee was appointed in August 2020. The committee comprised Prof Kosala Marambe, Chairperson, Dr. Wasana Jayarathne Secretary and Prof Indika Karunathilake, Dr Murali Vallipuranathan, Dr Sudath Samaraweera and Dr Umanga Sooriyarachchi as the members.

The decisions made at the first meeting held on 31st August in the SLMA council room were as follows.

1. To reactivate the CPD recognition process at the Ministry of Health level. Write a proposal including incentives to be considered based on ideas expressed by the Health ministry representatives and meet the higher officials such as Director General Health services, secretary health. A process of lobbying to obtain recognition from the Ministry of Health to CPD.
2. Developing accreditation criteria for both CPD providers and individual CPD activities
3. Developing a draft framework for an e-portfolio

Hence, a proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Health regarding the establishment of the national level CPD program which should come on par with the national recognition for CPD for Medical Officers by the Ministry of Health. In that proposal, SLMA, CPD committee proposed the following suggestions to the Ministry of Health.

- » Designing and developing a CPD competency framework for Medical Officers
- » Consider providing the option of follow either CPD or research for their allowances for medical officers
- » Consideration of earned CPD points for grade promotion of medical officers and annual transfers
- » The Ministry to recognize CPD providers through an accredited list

The SLMA is expecting formal recognition from the Ministry of Health for the national CPD programme and currently it is at the discussion stage. Further, the SLMA CPD committee hopes to expand the scope of the committee by inviting a representative each from the colleges and workout a system to share online resources.

Professor Indika Karunathilake informed, the SLMA has launched a CPD portal which is capable of covering some of the expected outcomes of the national CPD programme. The SLMA CPD portal provides a range of resources, easily accessible to doctors, in any part of Sri Lanka. Further, the committee decided to move towards an e-portfolio in parallel with the existing system. A draft e-portfolio framework was developed by the committee and expected to be piloted among doctors who are attached to the World Bank project of non-communicable disease prevention programme / primary care enhancement project. In addition, CPD committee is conducting ongoing discussions with the colleges on sharing online resources and linking these resources with SLMA CPD portal. We expect to utilize the funds of the aforementioned project for launching e-portfolio. In the meantime Prof. Indika Karunathilake met the Minister of Distance Education and is continuing discussions on the possibility of developing an online CPD platform for doctors.

The committee will have to formalize the program by liaising with the MoH, private sector and creating awareness through clinical societies.

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SRI LANKA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION CPD PORTAL

Welcome to the online CPD portal of the SLMA!



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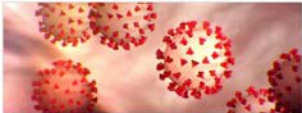
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Recently accessed courses



Communicable Diseases
Prevention and Management of COVID...

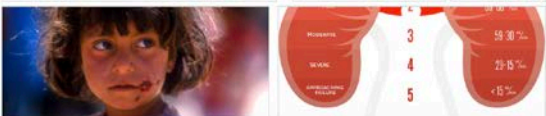
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Course overview

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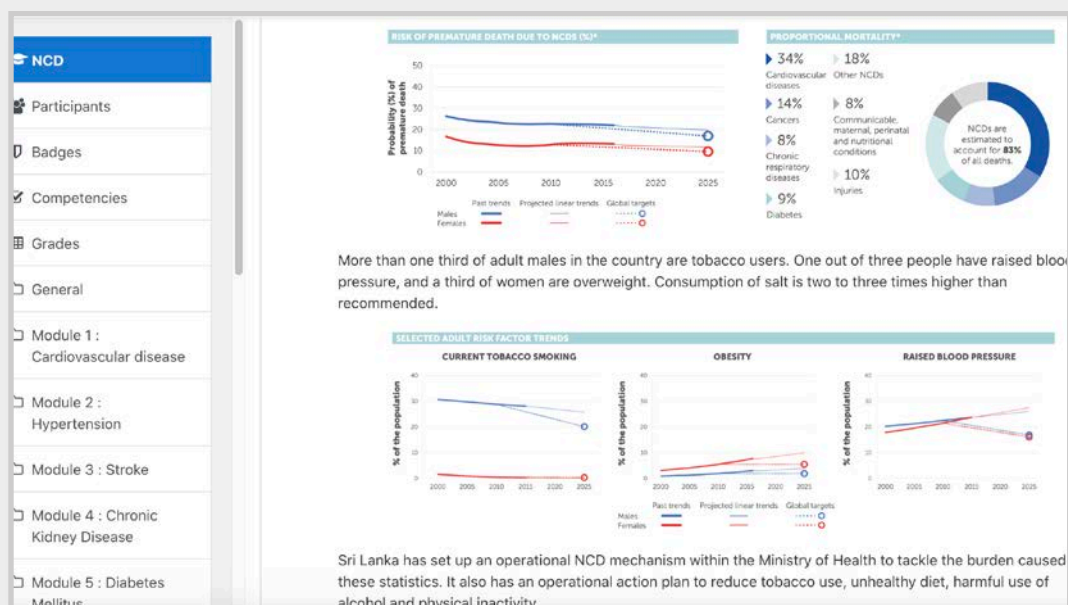
[Dashboard](#) / [My courses](#) / [NCD](#)

 Announcements

Introduction



Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), also known as chronic diseases, tend to be of long duration and are the



2019

- Participants
- Badges
- Competencies
- Grades
- General
- Module 1 : Dengue and its transmission
- Module 2 : Vector surveillance and control
- Module 3 : Management, Inter-coordination legal and ethical considerations of dengue control

DENGUE CONTROL Training module

Dengue is an epidemic disease which has periodic outbreak. For an example, Sri Lanka experienced an outbreak of dengue with the highest number of cases being reported in 2017 with more than 186101 cases and some 440 deaths. As a strategy to combat these epidemics the Ministry of health and WHO decided that a comprehensive training module on dengue control necessary that would benefit all the government officials and members of the public whose cooperation was necessary for dengue control activities.

The training programme includes multiple modalities of delivery (Incorporation into basic training, in-service training, and training for the health staff and a mobile platform for the general public).

9

- Participants
- Badges
- Competencies
- Grades
- General
- Module 1 : Dengue and its transmission
- Module 2 : Vector surveillance and control
- Module 3 : Management, Inter-coordination legal and ethical considerations of dengue control

Demonstration Video

Module 1 : Dengue Virus and its transmission

This module is designed to illustrate how dengue affects individuals and communities and the necessity of control module, you will learn about dengue, its causative agent – the dengue virus, its distribution, disease transmission and surveillance.

At the end of the module, the participants should be able to;

20. MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - SLMA NEWS+

Editor-in-Chief:	Dr. Chiranthi K. Liyanage
Editorial Committee:	Prof. Indika Karunathilake
	Dr. Nimani de Lanerolle
	Dr. BJC Perera
	Dr. Sarath Gamini De Silva
	Dr. Ruwan Ferdinando
	Dr. Clifford Perera

The SLMA monthly newsletter, SLMA NEWS+ was re-registered with the National Library and Documentation Services Board (NLDSB) as a monthly periodical with both printed and electronic publication. A new ISSN number was issued for the electronic magazine (ISSN 1800 – 4016).

As the contract with This Source Pvt Ltd ended, the designing and printing of the monthly magazine was outsourced to Institute of Media Education (IME). The advertisements for the magazine were sought and secured by the SLMA, retaining the income generated while a monthly payment was made to IME for their services in accordance with the contract.

The magazine was published each month with the e-magazine being circulated to the membership via email. It was also made freely accessible on the SLMA website and Facebook with around 15,000 views each month. A limited number of copies (100 copies in January to June, and 200 copies from July to November) were printed and disseminated to the members who had opted for the printed copy, SLMA council members, authors and contributors of the magazine, professional colleges, faculties of medicine and the Ministry of Health. The number of pages in each issue ranged from 28 to 44 pages depending on the content included. In an effort to acknowledge and promote aesthetic talents of doctors and medical undergraduates, the cover page of each issue featured a drawing or a photograph by such an individual. The magazine contained a wide range of articles on a variety of subjects including activities of the SLMA, timely issues related to health and advancements in the field of medicine in Sri Lanka. In light of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the monthly SLMA NEWS e-magazine served as an effective medium in disseminating useful information and news to the members in a timely manner.

Representations were made to HE President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Several members of the Council met with the President and discussed the continued role of the SLMA in the present context. Members of the Suicide Prevention Task Force Subcommittee were also present. The SLMA e-Magazine and Suicide Prevention Book were handed over.



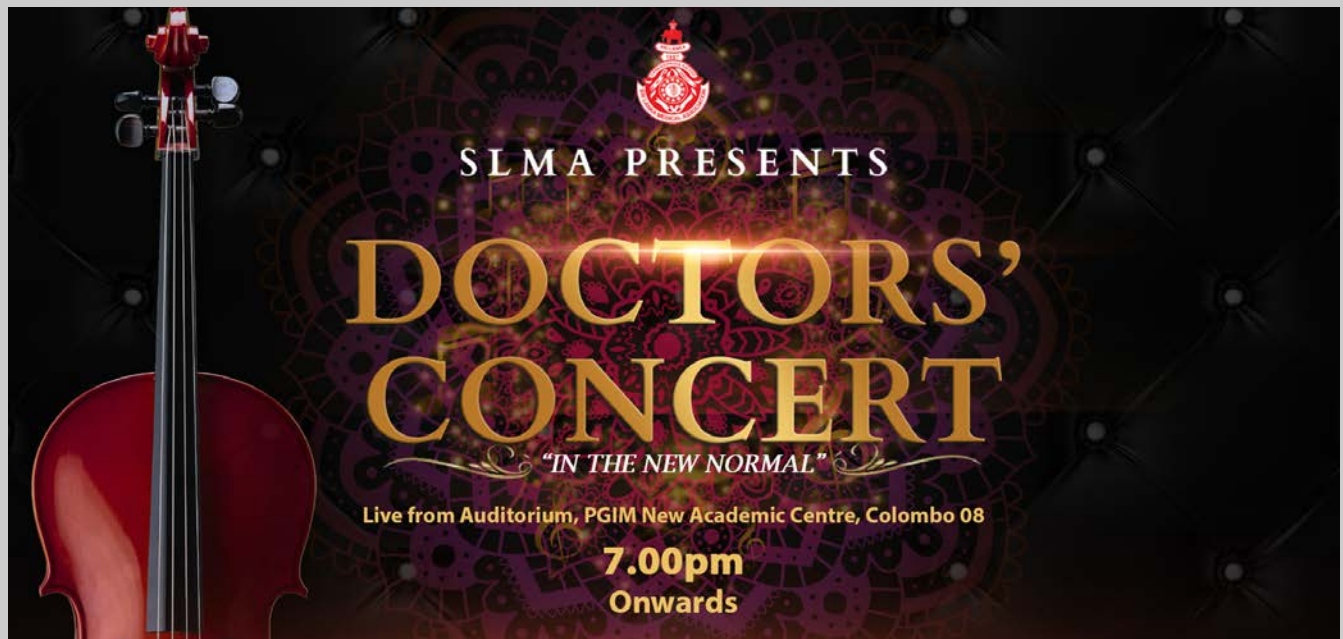


21. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

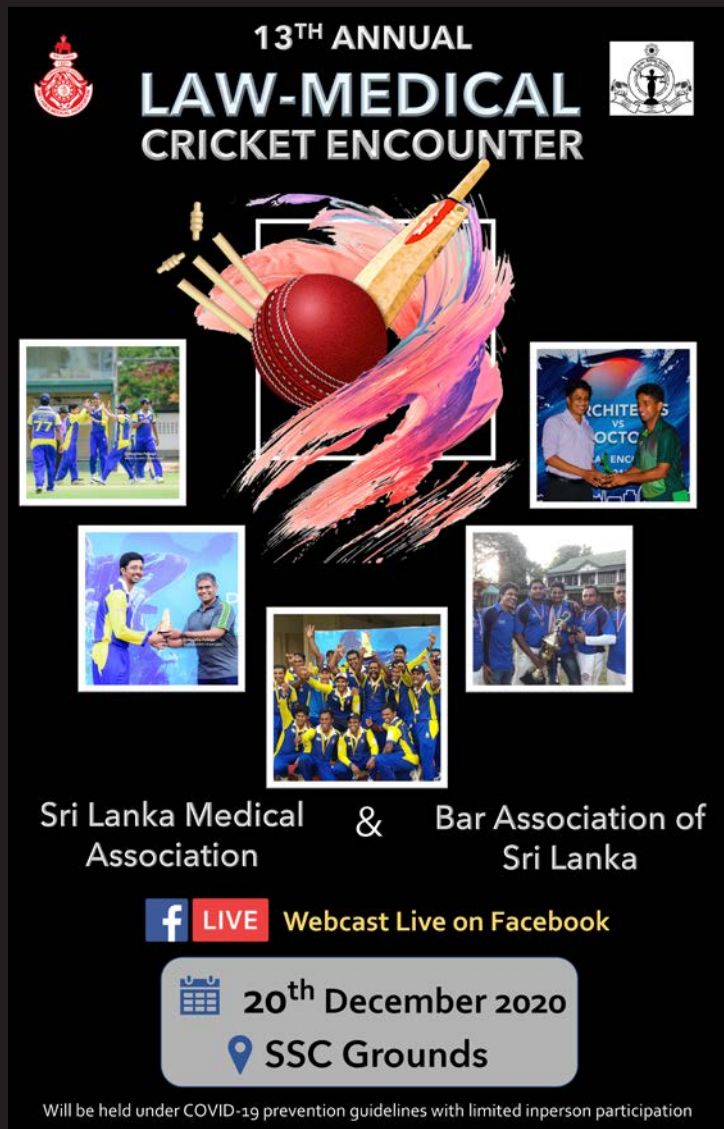
The Doctors Concert

The SLMA Doctors Concert 2020 was held on 26th July at the PGIM Auditorium, Rodney Street, Colombo 8. The concert commenced on time at 7.30 pm with a short speech by the President, Prof. Indika Karunathilake.

The amazing talents of doctors and their family members were presented in a glittering array of many different performances. There were a total of 15 items including solo and group items of singing, dancing, instrumental performances and a short drama. The event concluded with the council singing "Indunil Gangula".



22.THE SLMA CRICKET TEAM



The annual cricket encounter between SLMA and the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL), was held on 20th of December 2020 was held at SSC Grounds, Colombo. This year's event was hosted by the SLMA.

23.NEW MEMBERS

The number of new members for the year 2019 (including the names presented to the Council on 1st December 2019) is as follows.

Life	60
Ordinary	15
Student	79
Ordinary to life	02

The list of members enrolled during the year 2020 is given in **Annexure 7**.

24.TREASURER'S REPORT

The Sri Lanka Medical Association Treasurer's report for 2019/2020 is shown below. The passing year 2020 was a memorable year for the SLMA in terms of both its academic and advocacy activities. SLMA conducted three international academic conferences and engaged in many advocacy, training and awareness building activities while moving digital in the face of the COVID 19 pandemic. The SLMA premises including the auditorium were refurbished to facilitate this digital transformation.

The recurrent expenditure of the SLMA for 2020 was mainly for salaries of employees, EPF.ETF and bonus payments. The total cost for the year 2020 was Rs. 5,105,906. 00

The total administrative expenses for routine repairs, maintenance and upkeep of the premises for the last 12 months was Rs. 556,301. 00

The total income from the 133rd Anniversary International Medical Congress was Rs.6,397,600. 00. When the expenses for the congress (Rs 4,189,292. 00) is deducted the net profit was Rs 2,208,308. 00

The summary of main refurbishment activities carried out during this year and the relevant expenditure are as follows:

Renovations at Wijerama House	Cost
Refurbishment of the auditorium (sponsored by WHO)	Rs 1,516,000.00
Repairs to sunshade and removing obstructing tree branches	Rs 1,070,326.00
Total	Rs. 2,586,326.00

The net profit from the conferences after deducting the cost for renovations stands at Rs 2,572,323/= as shown below

Activity	Income	Expenses	Profit
Annual Congress	Rs. 6,397,600.00	Rs. 4,189,292.00	Rs 2,208,308.00
APACPH Conference	Rs. 4,415,804.00	Rs. 3,273,114.00	Rs 1,142,690.00
Total	Rs 10,813,404.00	Rs. 7,462,406.00	Rs. 3,350,998.00
Profit from Annual Congress + APACPH		Rs. 3,350,998.00	
Cost of refurbishment		Rs. 1,070,326.00	
Balance		Rs. 2,280,672.00	

Bank Balances

The total sum of fixed deposits by the end of financial year 2020 is Rs. 37,300,478/=

Total earnings from the fixed deposits during the year amounted to Rs 3,143,979. 00

(Including ICBD 2020 FD Amount Rs. 9,900,000/-)

Cash and bank balance as of 31/10/2020 remains at Rs.18,777,046. 00

Total assets less current liabilities inclusive of property, plant, equipment together with cash and deposits is estimated as at 31/10/2020.

25. TSUNAMI DISASTER RELIEF PROJECT/ EASTER SUNDAY BOMB BLAST RELIEF PROJECT- BATTICOLOA

Report Presented by Dr. Anula Wijesundere

The CMAAO / SLMA Joint Scholarship, administered by the Tsunami Disaster Fund is the main social responsibility project of the SLMA.

The scholarship was launched in December 2006 for children who lost one or both parents in the Tsunami Disaster of December 2004, by investing the generous donation of US \$ 50,000/- by the Confederation of Medical Associations of Asia and Oceania (CMAAO) and is being continued successfully.

The number of scholarship recipients in January 2020 was 4. Of these recipients.

Two A/L school going students receive Rs. 3, 500/- monthly and lower garden students receive Rs. 2, 500/- monthly. It is intended to give these four an extra payment of Rs. 5, 000/- in December to enable them to purchase school books, uniforms, shoes etc.

As the number of scholarship recipients has reduced from 24 in 2006 to 4 students in 2019, it was decided to use the balance money to offer scholarships to seven school children who lost one or both parents as a result of the Easter Sunday bombing at the Zion Church in Batticaloa. The responsibility of selecting the recipients and launching this scholarship was handed to President SLMA 2019 Dr. Anula Wijesundere by Dr. Suriyakanthie Amarasekera who was in charge of the project since its inception in 2006.

All these payments have been made using the monthly interest accumulated from the original deposit, leaving the capital intact. It is a privilege and pleasure to be able to extend a helping hand to these young ones who have faced so much tragedy in their lives.

26. ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS (OPA)

The President SLMA was appointed to represent the association at the OPA. Prof. Indika Karunathilaka attended meetings at OPA. Due to the Covid19 pandemic since March 2020, most of the scheduled activities and forum meetings were not held. Annual conference of OPA was held as an online conference this year adapting to the new normal situation. Although SLMA planned to conduct a seminar during this year, we had to postpone the events.

27. COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Introduction of eLearning for primary care staff is one of the key solutions identified by the Ministry of Health in order to address the above capacity building need without disturbing the routine works in the work station. Accordingly, in 2018 the Ministry of Health has launched a digital health platform for e-learning and started ground works to initiate distance learning course for Medical Officers in Primary Care using this platform. Sri Lanka Medical Association, Ministry of Health, Primary Healthcare System Strengthening Project and World Bank have collaboratively worked as key stakeholders to develop and implement the course.

Course development

The Secretary, Ministry of Health has appointed a steering committee for distance learning with the representation of all stakeholder parties in order to oversee the course development and implementation. Additional Secretary (Medical Services) of the Ministry of Health held the chairmanship of this committee.

Key milestones of the course development

- Conduct of consultative sessions with SLMA and College of Family Physicians to design a course for MOO in primary care.
- Identify 12 modules to the course and subject matter specialists to each course unit
- Identify 6 priority modules for the 1st phase of the course development
- Development of technical content, story lines for priority 6 modules by subject matter specialists
- Got approval for story lines from relevant directorates of the Ministry of Health

- Procurement of an agency to develop digital content for 6 priority modules
- Consultation with Professor Lani Gunawardhana in developing eLearning course; developing story lines, developing digital contents suitable for eLearning
- Development of the digital content for 6 priority modules and got approved them from subject matter experts
- Running the digital content of priority 6 modules in the platform

Course implementation

The commencement ceremony of the course was held at the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM) on 24th of February 2020 under the chairmanship of Dr. Anil Jasinghe Director General of Health Services and the presence of all stakeholders. Fifty medical officers representing verifiable hospitals of the PSSP were selected for the commencement of the programme and gradually enrolled the other medical officers. The course was opened to users with the introductory module on Primary care and subsequently opened the other course modules include NCD Screening and Management, Tuberculosis, CVD, Diabetes and Dengue. The online portal is now fully functional with six priority modules.

Regular contacts with the participants have been maintained throughout the period by PSSP. The participants were informed of the start of each new module via electronic mail, voice calls and short message services. Participants were also reminded to join the ongoing module using these same methods.

This first phase of the project is now successfully completed.

Webinar on Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Screening and Management

A Virtual classroom session for the module on “NCD screening and Management during COVID-19 pandemic” was held on Thursday, 8th of May from 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm with the participation of key experts representing the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka Medical Association and other professional organizations and academia. This webinar was conducted as part of the online continuous professional development (CPD) programme on primary care and it was attended by 88 course participants. The webinar can be accessed through the following link.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kfRsiCqLx0>



ADIC intervention of the Community Engagement in COVID-19 Response and Community Empowerment for Managing Similar Health Emergencies project

ADIC and the Department of Health Promotion of Rajarata University had an initial discussion with community leaders on 25th of November 2020 at the Boyawalana Temple. Both organizations introduced the programme objectives. Community leaders expressed the current situation of their villages and Boyawalana Maha Vidyala and the Galagamuwa Maha Vidyala were selected for the project. In the discussion, the staff of both schools expressed their ideas about school drug problems. Long term programmes with the students were conducted in both schools to address this issue.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIRTH DEFECTS (ICBD) - FEBRUARY 2020

The 9th International Conference on Birth Defects and Disabilities in Developing World (ICBD2020)

Recognizing the need to build capacity in lower-income countries for the prevention of birth defects and preterm birth and care of those affected, the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) hosted the 9th International Conference on Birth Defects and Disabilities in Developing World from 23rd to 26th February 2020 at the Hotel Cinnamon Grand in Colombo. The conference was co-organized with support from the Family Health Bureau and Health Promotion Bureau of the Ministry of Health; the World Health Organization; March of Dimes, USA; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA; the Human Genetics Unit, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo; many professional associations in Sri Lanka including the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians, College of Community Physicians of Sri Lanka, the Perinatal Society of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Heart Association, Sri Lanka Association for Child Development and Sri Lanka Association of Paediatric Surgeons; and community organizations dedicated to the care of children with birth defects and disabilities.

The goal of the conference was to provide specific practical tools and approaches that developing country participants could use to implement and strengthen surveillance and health care delivery and influence policy and funding in support when they return to their respective countries.

The theme of this Conference was “Health for All: Accelerate Efforts for Birth Defects Prevention and Care”. This theme aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) # 3 and its aim to ensure Universal Health Coverage - health for all people, everywhere in the world regardless of their power to pay or speak for themselves.

The opening ceremony was held on 23rd February with Hon. Minister of Health and Indigenous Medicine Services Mrs. Pavithra Wanniarachchi.

Dr. Kapila Jayaratne, Consultant Community Physician, was the Conference Chair and Dr. Anula Wijesundere, immediate past president SLMA, and Dr. Salimah Walani of March of Dimes were two Conference Co-chairs. Prof. Vajira Dissanayake functioned as the Scientific Chair of ICBD2020.

ICBD 2020 offered a high-quality mix of sessions and unique networking opportunities. The technical program was rich with 7 plenary sessions with invited speakers, 15 simultaneous symposia including symposia featuring oral

presentations and 10 poster sessions. More than 450 attendees from 36 countries were in attendance at this conference - they were healthcare professionals, policy makers, researchers, volunteers and students representing healthcare service organizations, academic institutions, governments, international organizations and civil society organizations.

The closing ceremony was graced by Mrs. Shiranthi Rajapakshe and added vividly to the occasion by participant children with disabilities.

It has been a decade after the Sixty-third World Health Assembly Resolution WHA63.17 Agenda item 11.7 (2010) on Birth Defects. There were no or little efforts being envisaged by the key players on reviewing the progress in implementing this resolution or any efforts to add momentum to the Birth defects care and prevention. As such, the participants of ICBD2020 formulated the Colombo “Declaration on Birth Defects Care and Prevention” pressurizing World Health Organization and other lead agencies to revisit and review the actions focused on the subject.

The conference attracted the focus of both local and international media highlighting the importance of birth defects as a priority area in health agendas. The subject of the conference was very much relevant to Sri Lanka too. The conference gave the opportunity to showcase Sri Lanka’s achievements in reducing infant deaths, and enabled to learn from the experience of other countries in the difficult task of reducing infant death further by reducing preterm births and birth defects – the two leading causes of infant deaths in Sri Lanka today.

The partner organizations, invitees, sponsors and participants rated the conference at very high level in all facets of the organizing by Sri Lanka Medical Association.







Organised by



Sri Lanka
Medical
Association



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

Partner Organizations



28. UPGRADE OF THE SLMA AUDITORIUM/ COUNCIL ROOM AND RENOVATION OF THE SLMA NEW BUILDING

The SLMA auditorium was refurbished with installation of 3 LED screens, a lectern, new sound system, lights, a multimedia projector, advanced fibre optic/ zoom facilities to cater to the new normal situation of holding hybrid model conferences in the future.

The council room was also upgraded with a screen, sound system and a projector. The upgrade was sponsored and facilitated by the World Health Organization, Sri Lanka country office.

The roof of the new SLMA building which was in a debilitated state was fixed with a new roof, a new water tank and all the sunshades around the building were cleaned and repaired. The roof and the premises were also cleaned.



29. PUBLICATIONS



මෙහි දක්වා ඇත්තේ ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ කෝකිලායි මුහුද වෙරළ 2020 වර්ෂයේ පෙබරවාරි මස 22 වෙනි දින දිස්වූ ආකාරයයි. ඉහත ඡායාරූප වල ඇති බෝතල් වල අක්ෂර කෙරෙහි හිමි අවදානම යොමු කරන්න. එම ජලාශ්‍රිත බෝතල් ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ තුල භාවිතා කර ඉවත දුන් බෝතල් නොවේ. එනම් මුහුදට මුද්‍රවීමත් පසු විදේශික රටක සිට මුහුදු රළ මස්සේ මෙරට වෙරළ තීරයට ගසාගෙන පැමිණී අපද්‍රව්‍ය වේ. අප විසින් සැලකිල්ලකින් තොරව ඉවත දුන් ජලාශ්‍රිත අපද්‍රව්‍යද මෙලසම් විදේශ රටවලට ගසාගෙන යනවාට කිසිදු සැකයක් නොමැත.

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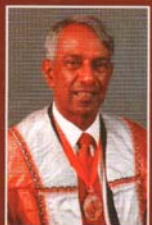
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நுண் பிளாஸ்டිக்கும் நீங்களும் | Microplastics and You

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**Suicide Prevention in Sri Lanka:
Recommendations for Action**



Policy Document
Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA)
Expert Committee on Suicide Prevention
December 2019



A trek known only to a few

The autobiography of
Dr. B. J. C. Perera
MBBS(Cey), DCH(Cey), DCH(Eng), MD(Paed), MRCP(UK),
FRCP(Edin), FRCP(Lond), FRCPCH(UK), FSLCPaed, FCCP, Hon. FRCPCH(UK), Hon. FCCP(SL)
Specialist Consultant Paediatrician, National Health Service of Sri Lanka
Honorary Senior Fellow, Postgraduate Institute of Medicine,
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: Programme of the 133rd Anniversary International Virtual Medical Congress

“MEET YOUR DOCTOR” EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Day 1- Saturday 25th July 2020

SESSION 1

Let's know about injuries

Dr. Yasas Abeywickrama, Consultant Plastic & Re-constructive Surgeon

Dr. Ayasmantha Peiris, Consultant Ophthalmologist

Dr. Lalith Ekanayake, Surgeon Rear Admiral Consultant Physician, Consultant in Diving & Hyperbaric Medicine

SESSION 2

Kids & Adolescents: What are your concerns (Sinhala Medium)

Dr. B.J.C. Perera, Consultant Paediatrician

Dr. Sajeewana Amarasinghe, Consultant Psychiatrist

Professor Shaman Rajindrajith, Consultant Paediatrician

SESSION 3

Kids & Adolescents: What are your concerns (Tamil Medium)

Dr. R. Ajanthan, Consultant Paediatrician

Dr. Shanthini Ganeshan, Consultant Paediatrician

Dr. Mahesan Ganeshan, Consultant Psychiatrist

SESSION 4

Sex & You

Dr. Chiran Hathurusinghe, Consultant Venereologist

Dr. Prageeth Suranga, Consultant Venereologist

Day 2- Sunday 26th July 2020

SESSION 5

Caring for the Elders

Dr. Padma Gunaratne, Consultant Neurologist

Dr. Udayangani Ramadasa, Consultant Physician

Dr. Dilhara Samaraweera, Consultant Physician

SESSION 6

Tips to lead a healthy lifestyle (Tamil Medium)

Dr. Kayathri Periyasamy, Consultant Physician

Dr. Noel Somasundaram, Consultant Endocrinologist

Dr. MK Ragunathan, Consultant Physician

SESSION 7

Tips to lead a healthy lifestyle (Sinhala Medium)

Dr. Priyankara Jayawardena, Consultant Physician

Dr. Upul Dissanayake, Consultant Physician

Dr. Navoda Attapattu, Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist

133rd Anniversary International Virtual Medical Congress of the Sri Lanka Medical Association

Programme at a Glance

Pre-Congress Workshops			
Workshop 1		"Microplastics in Sri Lanka & Human Health"	
Workshop 2		Deans' Round Table "Future of Medical Education Adapting to New Normal"	
Workshop 3		"Making an Effective Scientific Presentation" (By invitation)	
Workshop 4		"Recognition of medical degrees - beyond 2023"	
Workshop 5		"Clinical Genetics for Medical Practitioners"	
Workshop 6		"Preventing the next pandemic: One Health Approach"	
Workshop 7		"International Year of the Nurse & the Midwife: Health Workforce Development beyond COVID-19 Pandemic"	
Workshop 8		"Practical infection Prevention and Control Considerations in the Fight against COVID-19"	
Friday 24th July 2020 6.00 pm onwards			
Inauguration of the 133rd Anniversary International Virtual Medical Congress SLMA Oration "Improving the care for children with thalassaemia in Sri Lanka" Professor Sachith Mettananda MBBS, DCH, MD(Paed), DPhil(Oxford), FRCP(Edin) Professor and Head, Department of Paediatrics, University of Kelaniya Consultant Paediatrician, Colombo North Teaching Hospital, Ragama			

Saturday, 25 th July 2020			
09.00 – 09.30 am	Keynote Address Challenges in Healthcare Delivery in the area of Professionalism in the "New Normal"		
09.30 – 10.15 am	NDW Lionel Memorial Oration The challenge of the early arrivals: Preterm births revisited Dr. Kapila Jayaratne Consultant Community Physician, National Program Manager Maternal & Child Morbidity & Mortality Surveillance, Family Health Bureau		
10.15 – 10.30 am	Tea		
	Auditorium (Hall A)	Council Room (Hall B)	
10.30 – 12.00 pm	Symposium 1 Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Lessons Learnt Experiences from Sri Lanka, UK, USA & Singapore	Symposium 2 Are we forgetting the other Communicable Diseases? Leptospirosis, Influenza & TB	

12.00 – 12.30 pm	Guest Lecture 1 Supporting Primary Care during COVID-19 Pandemic	Guest Lecture 2 Environment and Communicable Diseases
12.30 – 01.30 pm	Lunch break and Free Paper Session 1	Lunch break and Free Paper Session 2
01.30 – 02.30 pm	Lunch break and Free Paper Session 3	Lunch break and Free Paper Session 4
02.30 – 03.00 pm	Guest Lecture 3 Looking Good in the “New World” Dr. Indira Kahawita	Guest Lecture 4 COVID & Sexual Health
03.00 – 04.30 pm	Symposium 3 Challenges in the management of COVID-19 infection Dilemmas in laboratory diagnosis, Prescribing as we go & Challenges in treatment	Symposium 4 Emerging & Re-emerging Infections Global Scenario, Are we prepared for another pandemic? & Public Health Response to infection prevention
04.30 – 05.30 pm	Health Innovation Awards	
05.30 pm	Tea & End of Day 2	

Sunday, 26th July 2020

09.00 – 09.30 am	Plenary 1 Role of Social Media in Continuous Professional Development of Doctors	
09.30 – 10.15 am	Plenary 2 Promoting Ethics & Professionalism during COVID-19 pandemic	
10.15 – 10.30 am	Tea	
	Auditorium (Hall A)	Council Room (Hall B)
10.30 – 12.00 pm	Symposium 5 Right-based approach to delivering comprehensive SRH Services for All in the new normal Panel Discussion (Sponsored by UNFPA)	Symposium 6 Impact of COVID-19: Policy Implications Primary Healthcare, NCD & Migration
12.00 – 12.30 pm	Guest Lecture 5 Gender Equity & Rights during emergencies	Guest Lecture 6 Effects on Nutrition during emergencies
12.30 – 01.30 pm	Lunch break and Free Paper Session 5	Lunch break and Free Paper Session 6
01.30 – 02.30 pm	Lunch break and Free Paper Session 7	Lunch break and Free Paper Session 8
02.30 – 04.00 pm	Symposium 7 Fast Forward to the “Future” Technology advances in Healthcare, Advances in delivery of Education, & New frontiers in Health Communication	Symposium 8 Psychosocial issues: During & After Livelihoods and mental health, Psychological wellbeing in Healthcare workers & The nature of, and coping with, family conflict during a lockdown
04.00 – 04.45 pm	Dr. S C Paul Memorial Oration “Child Mental Health: Literacy, Burden, Cultural Aspects and Developing Services for Sri Lanka!” Dr. Miyuru Chandradasa MBBS (Colombo) MD (Colombo) MRCPsych (UK) Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Colombo North Teaching Hospital in Ragama Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, the University of Kelaniya Senior Lecturer (Honorary), Faculty of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences of the Monash University, Australia	
07.00 -10.00 pm	Doctors’ Concert	

OVERSEAS RESOURCE PERSONS

Prof. Colin Binns
 Prof. Michael Kidd
 Dr. Dujeepa Samarasekara
 Adj. Prof. Thiru Thirumoorthy
 Prof. Zafar Iqbal
 Dr. Razia Pendse
 Ms. Tanzila Khan

Prof. TEO Yik Ying
 Dr. Bruce Maycock
 Prof. Wah-Yun Low
 Dr. Lawrence Shermann
 Dr. Henrik Syse
 Dr. Suchitra Dalvie

Dr. Navid Pourghasemi
 Prof. Malik Peiris
 Dr. Mickey Chopra
 Prof. Liesl Nydegger
 Dr. Navid Pour-Ghasemi
 Professor Susan Sawyer

RESOURCE PERSONS FROM SRI LANKA

Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama
 Dr. Dinil Abeygunawardena
 Dr. Lilani Rajapakshe
 Dr. Neranan Dissanayake
 Professor Piyanjali de Zoysa
 Dr. Vajira Dharmawardene

Professor Chandanie Wanigatunge
 Professor Hemantha Senanayake
 Professor Manuj C Weerasinghe
 Dr. Nihal Abeysinghe
 Professor Rangika Halwathura
 Dr. Vindya Kumarappeli

Dr. Chandimani Undugodage
 Dr. Jude Jayamaha
 Dr. Nayani Madarasinghe
 Dr. Panduka Karunanayake
 Professor Saroj Jayasinghe

Annexure 2: Programme of the APACPH 2020 Conference

	Pre-conference Workshop 1	Pre-conference Workshop 2
Title	Scientific Writing Workshop	Early Career Network W
Date	5 th December 2020	6 th December 2020
Time	8.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m. (GMT + 5.5)	9.00 a.m. – 12.00 a.m. (GMT + 5.5)
	<p>Moderator : Professor Dr Noran Hari, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya</p> <p>“How to get your paper published in the Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health” Professor Colin Binns, Editor-in-Chief, Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health</p> <p>“How to Write a Qualitative Research Paper” Professor Dr. Wah Yun Low, President, APACPH & Managing Editor, Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health</p> <p>“What do Editors Want in Submission to Their Journals?” Dr BJC Perera, Past President, SLMA</p>	<p>“Leadership of public health in the post COVID19 era”</p> <p>Dr Kremlin Wickramasinghe, Technical Officer at World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe</p> <p>Dr Don Eliseo Locero-Prisno III, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine</p> <p>Professor Koji Kanda, Department of Social Medicine, Asahikawa Medical University, Japan.</p>

MAIN CONFERENCE – Day 1

Time (GMT + 5.5)	Date : 8th December 2020	Venue: Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH)
0700 – 0830	Registration/ Video Presentations/Photography Competition	
0830 -1030	INAUGURATION CEREMONY	
	Keynote Address: Professor Malik Peiris, Department of Microbiology, School of Public Health University of Hong Kong	
	Awarding APACPH Medal	
	Sri Lanka: Theme Presentation	
1040 – 1100	Tea Break/Video and Poster Presentations/Photo Competition	
1100 – 1230	Symposium 01 COVID-19 –Regional Perspective-Lessons learnt and way forward	
1230 – 1330	<p>Chairperson: Dr Razia Pendse, WHO Representative to Sri Lanka</p> <p>“COVID 19 vaccines” Prof. Neelika Malavige, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka</p> <p>“Immunological Basis of COVID-19” Prof. Suranjith Seneviratne, Consultant in Clinical Immunology and Allergy, UK</p> <p>"New paradigms in the development of therapeutics for COVID -19" Prof. Nadarajah Sreeharan, Visiting Professor, King's College, London, UK</p>	
1400 – 1430	Theme Presentation	
1430 – 1530	Research Presentations in a virtual environment	
1530 – 1700	<p>Symposium 02 Digital Technologies and COVID-19 pandemic Chairperson: Dr Yuanan Lu, University of Hawaii, USA Prof Indika Karunathilake, President, SLMA</p> <p>“The origin of COVID-19 Surveillance System on the DHIS2 platform in Sri Lanka” Dr Pamod Amarakoon, PGIM, Sri Lanka</p> <p>“Scaling up the DHIS2 COVID 19 Surveillance System globally” Prof Jørn Braa, University of Oslo, Norway</p> <p>“Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with digital health technologies” Prof. Vajira Dissanayake, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka</p> <p>Q&A Session</p>	
1700 – 1830	Research Presentations in a virtual environment	

MAIN CONFERENCE – Day 2

Time (GMT + 5.5)	Date : 9th December 2020	Venue: Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH)
0730 -0900	<p style="text-align: center;">Symposium 03 Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS) and NCDs</p> <p>Chairpersons:</p> <p>Professor Tin Tin Su, Jeffrey Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Malaysia Dr Chanuantong Tanasugarn, Dean, Faculty of Public Health, Mahidol University, Thailand</p> <p>“Overview of SEACO HDSS and the states of hypertension and diabetes care” Prof. Tin Tin Su, Director, South East Asia Community Observatory (SEACO), JC School of Medicine & Health Sciences, Monash University (Malaysia)</p> <p>“Mental distress along the cascade of care in managing hypertension” Dr. Tan Min Min, SEACO, JC School of Medicine & Health Sciences, Monash University (Malaysia)</p> <p>“Prediction of 10 years Cardiovascular disease risk of community dwellers” Ms. Ang Chiew Way, SEACO, JC School of Medicine & Health Sciences, Monash University (Malaysia)</p> <p>“Population-Wide Screening For Atrial Fibrillation among older adults” Dr Devi Mohan, Global Public Health, JC School of Medicine & Health Sciences, Monash University (Malaysia)</p> <p>Expert comments: Prof Anne Marie Thow, Associate Professor, Public Policy and Health, Menzies Centre for Health Policy, The University of Sydney</p>	
09 00– 0930	<p style="text-align: center;">Professor Walter Patrick Memorial Lecture</p> <p>Chairpersons: Professor Bruce Maycock, Secretary General, APACPH Honorary Professor, College of Medicine and Health, University of Exeter Professor Hung-Yi Chiou, Taipei Medical University, Taiwan Professor Colin Binns, Foundation Head of the School of Public Health, Curtin University</p>	
0930 – 1100	<p>Panelists:</p> <p>Dr Philip Baker, Queensland University of Technology, Australia Dr. Nicholas Lo, Taipei Medical University, Taiwan Prof. Bruce Maycock, Honorary Professor, College of Medicine and Health, University of Exeter Dr. Naruemon Auemaneekul, Mahidol University, Thailand</p>	

1130 – 1230	Research Presentations in a virtual Environment
1230 – 1400	<p>Chairpersons: Dr Don Eliseo Locero-Prisno III, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Dr Deepika Attygalle, Senior Health Specialist, World Bank, South Asia</p> <p>“Prospects for Health and Development in the Asia-Pacific Region Post-Pandemic” Dr Patrick L. Osewe, Chief of Health Sector Group, Asian Development Bank</p> <p>“Prevention and Management of NCD in New Normal: A global perspective” Prof K. Shrinath Reddy, President, Public Health Foundation, India</p>
1430 – 1630	<p>Symposium 05 Universal Health (WHO)</p> <p><i>'Health for all: protect everyone. To end this crisis and build a safer and healthier future, we must invest in health systems that protect us all — now'.</i></p> <p>Chairpersons: Prof Indika Karunathilake, President, SLMA Dr Razia Pendse, WHO Country Representative for Sri Lanka</p> <p>Introduction of the theme and the panel of experts – Conference Co-Chairs</p> <p>Regional Progress and Strategy on UHC- Dr Alaka Singh, Regional Advisor, WHO SEARO</p> <p>Country Situation on UHC- Dr Eshani Fernando, Director Planning MOH/ National Focal Point for SDG3</p> <p>Expert Panel Perspectives on “How can Sri Lanka further strengthen the resilience of the health system to achieve Health for All and protect the population from public health emergencies?”</p> <p>Human Resources for Health: Dr Palitha Abeykoon – Public Health Specialist Health Financing: Prof Amala de Silva – Professor of Economic – University of Colombo Essential Medicines: Dr K Weerasuriya, WHO, Geneva Service Delivery for UHC: Prof Saroj Jayasinghe – Professor of Medicine – University of Colombo Community empowerment for UHC: Prof Manuj Weerasinghe – Professor in Community Medicine – University of Colombo Moderated panel discussion – Conference Co-Chairs</p> <p>Expert Comments: Prof. Srinath K Reddy, President (Public Health Foundation of India)</p>
1630 – 1700	<p>Guest Lecture Chairpersons: Professor Indika Karunathilake, President, SLMA</p> <p>“Role of Social Determinants of Health in the New Normal” Sri Michael Marmot, Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London</p>
1700 – 1800	Presentation by Organizing committee of APACPH 2021 and Closing Ceremony

Annexure 3: Programmes of Clinical Meetings

Tuesday 21st January 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SRI LANKA COLLEGE OF PAEDIATRICIANS

“Headache in Children”

Dr. Anuruddha Padeniya, Consultant Paediatric Neurologist, Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children, Colombo

Tuesday 18th February 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SRI LANKA COLLEGE OF HAEMATOLOGISTS

Case presentation

Dr. M. S. Buddadasa, Registrar in Clinical Haematology

Discussion

Dr. D. P. Ranasinghe, Senior registrar in Clinical Haematology

Quiz

Dr. Nadishani Ediriwickrama, Consultant in Clinical Haematology

Tuesday 6th October 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SRI LANKA COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGY

Atrial myxomas

Dr. Ajanthan Sivalingam, Senior Registrar in Cardiology, NHSL, Colombo

Interesting Acute Coronary Syndrome Presentations

Dr. Dinuka Liyanage, Senior Registrar in Cardiology, NHSL, Colombo

Thursday 15th October 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COLLEGE OF ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS & INTENSIVISTS SRI LANKA

McNamara Fallacy & Evidence Based Medicine

Dr. Asoka Gunaratne, Consultant Anaesthetist, President College of Anaesthesiologists & Intensivists of Sri Lanka

Case Presentation

Dr. Nuwan Ranawaka, Consultant Intensivist, Cardiology Unit, Colombo

Tuesday 20th October 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIAN AND GYNAECOLOGIST IN SRI LANKA

Case Presentation

Dr. Sajith Kodithuwakku, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Base Hospital, Medirigiriya

Perimortem Caesarean Delivery

Dr. Sanjeewa Padumadasa, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya

Peripartum Collapse

Dr. Nilan Rodrigo, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine, Kothalawala Defence University

MCQ Discussion

Dr. Rasika Herath, Lecturer, Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya

Thursday 29th October 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SRI LANKA COLLEGE OF DERMATOLOGISTS

Case Presentation

Dr. T. M. U. Liyanage, Senior Registrar in Dermatology, Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya

Review Lecture

Dr. Binari Wijenayake, Consultant Dermatologist, Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya

MCQ Discussion

Dr. Vanitha Shanmuhathas, Senior Registrar in Dermatology, Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya

Tuesday 3rd November 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COLLEGE OF OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

THE EYE IN DERMATOLOGY**Case presentation**

Dr. S. W. R. Somaweera, Senior Registrar, National Eye Hospital, Colombo

Review Lecture - Related to cases

Dr. Pradeepa K. Siriwardena, Consultant Eye Surgeon, National Eye Hospital, Colombo

MCQ

Dr. Kushlani Gooneratne, Consultant Eye Surgeon, National Eye Hospital, Colombo

Picture Quiz

Dr. G. J. N. Widanage, Senior Registrar, National Eye Hospital, Colombo

Thursday 26th November 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE PERINATAL SOCIETY OF SRI LANKA

Prevention of preterm labour

Dr. Prabodhana Ranaweera, Senior Lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo

Immediate management of preterm

Dr. Nalin Gamathige, Consultant Neonatologist, De Soysa Maternity Hospital, Colombo

Case based discussion; overcoming challenges in preterm

Dr. Surantha Perera, Consultant Paediatrician, Castle Street Hospital for Women, Colombo

Tuesday 1st December 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CEYLON COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS

Thursday 3rd December 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SRI LANKA COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS

Overall Topic - "Covid and mental health"**Mental health issues related to Covid: Case scenarios**

Dr. Mirza Jamaldeen, Senior Registrar in Psychiatry, Teaching Hospital Peradeniya

Suicide and self harm in the context of Covid 19

Prof. Thilini Rajapakse, Professor of Psychiatry, University of Peradeniya

How to manage psychiatric manifestations during Covid

Dr. Gihan Abeywardane, Consultant psychiatrist, Teaching Hospital Kandy and President of the Sri Lanka College of Psychiatrists

Discussion**Tuesday 15th December 2020**

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SRI LANKA COLLEGE OF PULMONOLOGISTS

Place of Lung Functions in CTD-ILD

Dr. Dilesha Wadasinghe Liyanarathnage
Consultant Respiratory Physician/Lecturer in Physiology

Case history by:

Dr. L. B. N. Chandramal, Senior Registrar in Respiratory Medicine
National Hospital of Sri Lanka, Colombo / Central Chest Clinic, Colombo

Interstitial Lung disease and connective tissue disorders by

Dr. Asha Samaranayake, Consultant Respiratory Physician,
National Hospital of Sri Lanka, Colombo / Central Chest Clinic, Colombo

Friday 18th December 2020

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CEYLON COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS

Case presentation & case based discussion by

Dr. A.G.T.A. Kariyawasam, Senior Registrar Medicine, NHSL
and
Dr. Thuvarakan Poobalasingam, Registrar Medicine, NHSL

'Acute on chronic liver failure' - the physician's perspective'

Dr. G. G. Liyanarachchi, Consultant Physician, NHSL

Picture Slide presentation by

Dr. A. G. T. A. Kariyawasam, SR Medicine, NHSL

Picture Quiz

Dr. G. J. N. Widanage, Senior Registrar, National Eye Hospital, Colombo

Annexure 4: Programmes of Regional Meetings**JOINT CLINICAL MEETING WITH THE BASE HOSPITAL PANADURA**

29th January 2020 at the Auditorium, MOH Office, Panadura

Registration
National Anthem
Lighting of the Lamp of Learning
Welcome Speech
Dr. Indrani Godakanda, Medical Superintendent, BH Panadura
SLMA President's address
Prof. Indika Karunathilake

Session 1**Chairpersons:**

Dr Indrani Godakanda, Consultant Community Physician
Dr Aruna Wijesinghe, Consultant Cardiologist
Assessing a person with suicidal ideas: Clinical pearls
Dr. Iyanthi Madegama, Consultant Psychiatrist, BH Panadura
"Once in - good for life": Not applicable anymore!

Prof. Indika Karunathilake, Professor in Medical Education, University of Colombo

Managing Non-communicable Diseases: Case-based Discussions

Dr Ajith Kariyawasam, VP - OPD, BH Panadura

Session 2

Chairpersons:

Dr Nalika De Silva (Consultant Paediatrician)

Dr P. Manivannan (Consultant Physician)

Modern Prophylaxis for the school - aged asthmatic

Dr BJC Perera, Senior Consultant Paediatrician

Health impacts of the Climate change: an eye opener

Dr Hemantha Kumara, Specialist in Disaster Management

Ending AIDS in 2025: What we can do?

Dr. Manjula Rajapakshe, Consultant Venereologist, Kalutara

Management of poisoning: a practical approach

Dr Tamishka Arepola, Acting Consultant Emergency Physician, BH Panadura

Vote of thanks

Dr Madusha Nagasinghe

Secretary, Clinical Society, BH Panadura

JOINT CME PROGRAMME WITH THE ASIRI GROUP OF HOSPITALS

27th February 2020 at the Auditorium, Asiri Surgical Hospital

Registration

National Anthem

Lighting of the Lamp of Learning

Welcome Speech

Dr. Anil Perera, Clinical Director, Asiri Surgical Hospital & Asiri Hospitals Holdings

SLMA President's address

Prof. Indika Karunathilake, President, SLMA

Session 01

Chairpersons:

Prof. Indika Karunathilake, President, SLMA

Dr. Manujula Karunaratne, Chief Executive Officer, Asiri Hospital Holdings PLC

A practical approach on stroke follow-up

Dr. Padma Gunaratne, Consultant Neurologist

ABC of blood cancer care

Dr. Saman Hewamana, Consultant Haemato- Oncologist

Session 02

Chairpersons:

Dr. Kalyani Guruge – Consultant Paediatrician

Dr. Anil Perera – Clinical Director - Asiri Hospital Holdings PLC

Diabetes in Childhood

Dr. Navoda Atapattu, Consultant Paediatric & Endocrinologist

Invasive and non-invasive diagnosis of cardiac diseases

Dr. Chamara Rathnayake, Consultant Cardiologist

Diagnosis and management of osteoporosis

Dr. Chiranthi Liyanage, Lecturer, Department of Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo

Vote of thanks

Dr. Champika Boghawatta, Medical Director, Asiri Surgical Hospital

JOINT REGIONAL MEETING WITH THE KANDY SOCIETY OF MEDICINE

18th October 2020

Link to the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ucO6vrDoqEtO6Arz1bi0GOf2ADJRcYyKu>

"Suicide and self-harm in Sri Lanka: Can it be prevented?"

Prof. Thilini Rajapaksha, Professor in Psychiatry, Dept. of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya

Real life scenarios on depression

Dr. Pabasari Ginige, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya

'A challenge for joyful living: novel psychoactive substances'

Dr. Chathurie Suraweera, Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry, Dept. of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo

Primary Prevention of misbehavior

Prof. Rasanayaka M. Mudiyanse, Consultant Paediatrician/ Professor in Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya

Annexure 5 : Foundation Sessions Programme

Saturday 7th November 2020

Symposium 1 – Stay strong: Live long

Foods to Live Longer

Dr. Renuka Jayatissa, Medical Nutritionist,

MRI Exercise is medicine: A Vital sign not to miss

Dr. Chathuranga Ranasinghe, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo & Specialist in Sports & Exercise Medicine

Stress & NCDs

Dr. Mahesh Rajasuriya, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo & Consultant Psychiatrist

Symposium 2 – Neurology: True companion of your health - Scenario Based discussion

Approach to acute headache in adults

Dr. Gaminie Pathirana, Consultant Neurologist, NHSL

Practical Approach: Evaluating Symptoms of Peripheral Nervous System

Dr. Champika Gunawardana, Consultant Neurologist, Teaching Hospital, Rathnapura

Dementia Syndromes: Clinical evaluation and management

Dr. Manjula Caldera, Consultant Neurologist, Teaching Hospital, Anuradhapura

Lunch

Symposium 3 – Safety is No accident

Uncover Your Deductive Power @ Eye Casualty

Dr. Chameera Bandara, Consultant Oculoplastic Surgeon at National Eye Hospital, Colombo

Safe living-is it a dream?

Dr. Jagath Rathugamage, Consultant Neurosurgeon, NHSL, Colombo

Management of Burns

Dr. Yaras Abeywickrama, Consultant Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon, Colombo South Teaching Hospital, Kalubowilla

Symposium 4 – Know Your Heart Beat – Scenario Based discussion

Practical approach to acute coronary syndrome

Dr. Sampath Withanawasam, Consultant Cardiologist, NHSL

Interesting Acute Coronary Syndrome presentations

Case based discussion

Dr. Aruna Wijesinghe, Consultant Cardiologist, BH Panadura

Dr. Stanley Amarasekera, Consultant Cardiologist, NHSL

Practical approach to sudden cardiac death

Dr. Susitha Amarasinghe, Consultant Cardiac Electrophysiologist, TH Karapitiya

Evening Tea

Annexure 6 : Programmes of Symposia, Seminars and Workshops

Symposium on “Infections in the elderly: the challenges”

9th January 2020 at 12.00 noon at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Organized by the Expert Committee on Communicable Diseases of the SLMA

Why are the elders more susceptible for infections?

Dr. Chamila Dalpatadu, Consultant Physician, Senior Lecturer in Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo

Variations in the clinical presentation and challenges in management of infections in the elders

Dr. Panduka Karunanayake, Consultant Physician, Senior Lecturer in Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo

Multi drug resistant infections in elderly: tackling the nightmare

Dr. Bhagya Piyasiri, Consultant Microbiologist, Teaching Hospital Karapitiya

Discussion

Symposium on “Novel Coronavirus Infection (nCoV), Wuhan, China: Are we ready to face it?”

30th January 2020 at 12.00 noon at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Organized by the Expert Committee on Communicable Diseases & Media Committee of the SLMA

Virological & diagnostic aspects of nCoV

Dr. Saranga Sumathipala, Consultant Virologist, Teaching Hospital, Anuradhapura

An update on current global situation of nCoV

Dr. Sudath Samaraweera, Chief Epidemiologist, Ministry of Health

Clinical signs and management of nCoV patients

Dr. Ananda Wijewickrema, Consultant Physician, National Institute of Infectious Diseases

Preventive measures taken in Sri Lanka at points of Entry

Dr. S.M. Arnold, Director / Quarantine, Ministry of Health

Role of World Health Organization

Dr. Sapumal Danapala, WHO Country Office

Role of International Organization for Migration

Dr. Indrantha Welgama, National Migration Health Physician, International Organization for Migration

Discussion

Symposium on “Cosmetics, Plastics and Processed Food: Are we Killing Ourselves?”

20th February 2020 at 12.00 noon at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Organized by the Media Committee of the SLMA

Open for doctors, healthcare professionals, journalists and general public

Microplastics and cancer risk

Dr. Sajith Edirisinghe,
Lecturer and Clinical Geneticist, Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medical Sciences,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Food additives, health risks and cancer

Dr. Hemantha Herath,
Specialist in Community Medicine, Director, National TB Control Program, Former Deputy Director,
Environmental & Occupational Health

Clinician's perspective on regulation of cosmetics

Dr. Sriyani Samaraweera,
Consultant Dermatologist, Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children

Good and bad of cosmetic use

Dr. Indira Kahawita,
Consultant Dermatologist, Base Hospital, Homagama

Q & A Session**Symposium on “Injury Prevention”**

28th February 2020 at 8.30 am at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Welcome address

Prof. Indika Karunathilake, President, Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA)

Address by Dr. Chamindri Witharana,

President, Sri Lanka Academy of Young Scientists (SLAYS)

How to be a responsible road user

Mr. Dilantha Malagamuwa, International Car Racing Champion

Risky behaviors during adolescence

Dr. Miyuru Chandradasa, Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, Colombo North Teaching Hospital
Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Ragama

First aid following injuries

Dr. Yasas Abeywickrama, Consultant Plastic Surgeon, Colombo South Teaching Hospital

Discussion**Interactive session**

Moderated by Dr. Thilina Egodage, SLMA

Vote of thanks

Dr. Sumithra Tissera, Honorary Secretary, SL

Symposium on “Clarify your doubts regarding COVID-19”

20th March 2020 at 11.00 am at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Organized by the Expert Committee on Communicable Diseases & Media Committee of the SLMA

AN EXPERT PANEL DISCUSSION (Q & A) VIA A WEBINAR

(We do not encourage in person participation)

Target group: Doctors, healthcare workers, anyone interested in getting their facts right!

Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama, Consultant Physician

Dr. Sudath Samaraweera, Chief Epidemiologist, Ministry of Health

Prof. Neelika Malavige, Professor in Microbiology, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayawardenepura

Dr. Rohini Wadanambi, Consultant Microbiologist, Lanka Hospital

Career Guidance Seminar for Junior Doctors

30th August 2020, at 8.30 am at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Seminar organized by the Expert Committee on Health Management of the SLMA

Session I

Welcome Address

Prof. Indika Karunathilake

Postgraduate Training Programme

Dr. Himani Molligoda

Dermatology

Dr. Kanchana Mallawaarachchi

Surgery & Sub specialties

Prof. Ranil Fernando

Venereology

Dr. Buddhika Perera

Anaesthesiology

Prof. Anuja Abayadeera

QUESTIONS

Session II

Medicine & Sub specialities
Obstetrics & Gynaecology
Paediatrics
Health Informatics
Universities
QUESTIONS

Dr. Upul Dissanayake
Dr. Rukshan Fernandopulle
Prof. Vasantha Devasiri
Prof. Vajira HW Dissanayake
Prof. Vajira HW Dissanayake

Session III

Private Health Sector
Ministry of Health - Cadre
Radiology
Community Medicine
Microbiology
Ophthalmology
QUESTIONS

Dr. Samanthi de Silva
Dr. Dileep de Silva Radiology
Dr. Rupa Kannangara
Dr. Kapila Jayaratne
Dr. Dhammika Vidanagama
Dr. K. A. Salvin

Session IV

Psychiatry
Otorhinolaryngology
Forensic Medicine
Medical Administration
Pathology
Armed Services
General Practice
QUESTIONS

Dr. Suhashini Ratnatunga
Dr. Ravi Dayasena
Prof. Ravindra Fernando
Dr. Sudath Dharmarathne
Dr. Dulani Beneragama
Col. (Dr.) Saveen Semage
Dr. Dilini Baranage

Seminar on “Overdiagnosis – Too Much Medicine, 2020”

13th October 2020 at 11.00 am at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

Welcome

President of SLMA Prof. Indika Karunathilake

Introduction**What package for an annual check up?**

Prof. Kumara Mendis

Pill for Every Ill; where are we going wrong?

Dr. Shamila T. De Silva

Making of a Patient – a modern epidemic

Prof. Saman Gunatilake

Older adults: Do they deserve more?!

Dr. F. H. D. Shehan Silva

Treatment of joint pain – Gone too far!

Dr. Himantha Athukorale

Media Update: "Covid 19; Dealing with Life Stressors"

12th November 2020 at 9.00 am at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

*Organized by the Media Committee of the Sri Lanka Medical Association with the Collaboration of the Sri Lanka College of Psychiatrists***Have trust in the health system; Covid is manageable**

Dr. Padma Gunaratne, Consultant Neurologist & President-elect, SLMA

Covid-19; Managing stressors

Dr. Mahesh Rajasuriya, Senior Lecturer, University of Colombo & Consultant Psychiatrist, National Hospital of Sri Lanka

Old myths, new myths; Challenging mythical traders

Dr. Kapila Ranasingha, Consultant Psychiatrist, National Institute for Mental Health

Symposium on "Traditional Medicines used in NCD care: Where are we?"

16th December 2020 at 11.00 am at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium

*Organized by the Expert Committee on Non Communicable Diseases of the SLMA***Moderators:** Prof. Indika Karunathilake, Dr. Jayanthimala Jayawardena**Native herbal medicines for NCDs - current evidence and future potential**

Dr. Priyanga Ranasinghe MBBS, MD, PhD

Consultant Physician, Senior Lecturer in Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo

Place of native medicines in western allopathic treatment - the way forward

Dr. Seneka Pilapitiya MBBS, MD, Diploma in Ayurveda

MBBS(Col), MD(Medicine)(Col), PGCMC(Col) Diploma in Ayurveda(SL)

Senior Lecturer in Medicine & Consultant Physician

Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Q & A session**Annexure 7: List of New Members****Life Members (60)**

Dr. G. A. J. T. N. Silva
 Dr. A. P. N. N. Wijenayaka
 Dr. L. P. Kalpage
 Dr. W. D. Thilakarathna
 Dr. E. A. A. P. Amaratunga
 Dr. W. A. S. Wickramasinghe
 Dr. D. A. Nathaniel
 Dr. D. V. Abeygunawardane
 Dr. S. A. Seneviratne
 Dr. P. L. A. N. Liyanage
 Dr. P. G. I. Dissanayake
 Dr. K. D. N. P. Ranaweera
 Dr. M. Pirabakar
 Dr. H. G. T. C. Ariyadasa
 Dr. W. M. T. S. Wijetunga
 Dr. K. N. A. Perera
 Dr. P. U. Tharanga De Silva
 Dr. H. C. Pathirage
 Dr. K. K. Gamage
 Dr. R. W. Alwis

Dr. W. K. T. R. Fernando
 Dr. M. Karunaarachchi
 Dr. C. G. Kohombange
 Dr. D. Hettiarachchi
 Dr. D. V. M. Dias
 Dr. T. M. S. H. Dharmaratne
 Dr. B. J. Karunarathna
 Dr. B. D. R. Hewawithrana
 Dr. W. A. T. K. Wickramarachchi
 Dr. M. M. Muthuthamby
 Dr. D. P. R. C. Silva
 Dr. K. A. S. D. Ratnayake
 Dr. D. Wijesundara
 Dr. F. Z. Razeen
 Dr. T. S. R. T. R. Rajab
 Dr. B. R. M. Samarathunga
 Dr. M. W. D. W. Lakmini Ganga
 Dr. J. R. S. De Silva
 Prof. N. D. N. A. Mendis
 Dr. A. Sivalingam

Dr. O. T. D. Perera
 Dr. P. D. L. R. Wijesinghe
 Dr. A. M. J. Abeynayake
 Dr. S. A. C. Dalpatadu
 Dr. T. D. Bandara
 Dr. I. A. G. M. P. Gunathilake
 Dr. S. S. W. Fernando
 Dr. N. I. C. Perera
 Dr. N. Sakthiraj
 Dr. G. U. P. De Silva
 Dr. M. P. P. U. Chulasiri
 Dr. S. Pamathy
 Dr. A. D. Samankula
 Dr. R. U. Vithiya
 Dr. S. V. A. G. Kaushalya Perera
 Dr. D. C. T. Kospelawaththa
 Dr. I. A. Perera
 Dr. P. V. N. Wijesinghe
 Dr. W. S. P. Yapa
 Dr. L. V. Jayasinghe

Ordinary Members (15)

Dr. A. N. Hettiarachchi
 Dr. W. M. U. B. B. Wanisundera
 Dr. M. S. Buddhadasa
 Dr. K.M.I.C. Perera
 Dr. S. P. Rombage

Dr. L. B. L. Balasooriya
 Dr. G. H. I. D. Darshika
 Dr. D. P. Ranasinghe
 Dr. K.A.N.E. Yasarithna
 Dr. M. Mathurageethan

Dr. W. A. S. Dilhani
 Dr. T. S. M. Fernando
 Dr. R.M.A.D.L. Rathnayake
 Dr. C. V. Maddumahewa
 Dr. H. W. T. D. Wijayarathne

Student members (43)

Miss. R. Jayasinghe
 Miss. G. N. U. Abeyrathne
 Mrs. S. R. Rupasinghe
 Miss. P. M. Nagawegedara
 Miss. L. P. S. Jayasinghe
 Mr. M. R. U. Harshana
 Miss. P. A. D. P. Harshani
 Mrs. F. S. Anas
 Mr. K. G. A. Chathuranga
 Miss. S. Sumitha
 Mr. T. M. W. C. B. Dissanayake
 Mrs. I. Ajantha Attanayake
 Mr. Tharindu Wickramasinghe
 Miss. Yogarajah Geerthanna
 Mr. B. Thuvaragan

Mr. H. M. S. A. Herath
 Miss. R. A. P. Piyumanthi
 Mrs. N. A. Y. Isuruni
 Miss. B. A. N. P. Balasooriya
 Mr. Malintha Alahakoon
 Mr. W. A. C. J. Hangilipola
 Miss. H. P. N. S. Hapuarachchi
 Miss. S. A. D. A. Suraweera
 Mr. D. H. Horadugoda
 Mr. K. Mohanasundaram
 Miss. K. S. T. M. Wijitharathne
 Miss. T. M. V. M. Abeyrathne
 Miss. P. G. C. Wijayasiri
 Mrs. F. S. Rufaideen

Mr. R. S. P. K. Lakmal
 Mr. L. N. De Silva
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