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137th Anniversary International Medical Congress 2024



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Sri Lanka Medical Association

DOCTORS' DANCE

Excellent Band
Prizes & surprises!

6th December 2024
7PM Onwards
at the
Grand Ballroom, Hotel Galadari

Ticket prices will be revealed soon.
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**"EXCELLENCE IS NEVER AN ACCIDENT;
IT IS THE RESULT OF HIGH INTENTION,
SINCERE EFFORT, INTELLIGENT DIRECTION,
SKILLFUL EXECUTION AND THE VISION TO SEE
OBSTACLES AS OPPORTUNITIES."**



President's Message

Dear Members of the SLMA,

The 137th International Medical Congress, the main academic event of the SLMA calendar, was held very successfully from 16th to 18th August 2024 at the Hotel Galadari, Colombo. The Congress Theme 'Ensuring Equity in Healthcare during Challenging Times' was selected at a time when it was evident that the Sri Lankan health sector was facing trying and challenging times. Therefore, it was imperative for us to focus on equity, despite the conundrums enforced on the system. Universal Health Coverage (UHC) strives to achieve equity, but the attainment of UHC has been a daunting prospect. The achievement of Sustainable Development Goals would also drive forward this concept of attainment of equity.

The congress provided a platform to discuss and understand the current health and medical backdrop of Sri Lanka, as well as the difficult terrain that has to be negotiated in the field of health created by the recent pandemic and economic difficulties, and the ways to navigate for better health care for all citizens.

The conference, covered a myriad of topics, discussing diseases and conditions seen in daily practice such as non-communicable diseases, infections, intensive care, common respiratory conditions, and also discussed varying interesting and pertinent topics such as vaping, sexual health, vaccines, and Artificial Intelligence in medicine.

Before the Main Congress, seven very successful and well attended Pre-Congress Workshops were held in collaboration with professional colleges since January 2024. It was a novel concept, but a calculated risk. However, I think we struck gold, as these initiatives were very successful, crowd pulling enterprises providing valuable knowledge to doctors which would be necessary to improve the care of patients. In addition, this provided much needed visibility to SLMA as a leading provider



of Continuous Medical education (CME) to the health professionals.

The Scientific Programme put forward by the Academic committee was very comprehensive, stimulating and thought-provoking in all aspects. It catered to the needs of all categories of practicing medical doctors and the eager researchers alike, in conformity with the wider academic and scholastic policies of the SLMA.

The Main Congress featured twelve symposia featuring these topics, a Keynote Address and four Scientific Orations. There were also eight plenaries and, as always, an opportunity was given to present research findings and opinions in the free papers and poster sessions.

The SLMA Debate gave the members of the medical community an opportunity to discuss and even disagree on certain issues as well as offering an opportunity to bring to light other skills they surely possess. The Academic Programme rich in many variegated components of knowledge and ideas, finally ended with the Doctors' Concert that provided a most fitting and lively entertaining end to the medical congress.

The final product of this 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress was the hard work and labour of a wonderful team that came together to bring these sessions to life. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Congress Academic Chair and Vice President of SLMA, Professor Hasini

Banneheke. She was well and truly, as well as ably, supported in this vast endeavour by the Co-Secretaries of the Congress, Dr Pramitha Mahanama, Dr Kaushi Attanayakege and Dr Sasangi Alwis, Honorary Secretary Dr Lahiru Kodituwakku and all the members of the Academic Committee, Co-ordinators of Special Events (Orations, Photographic Exhibition and Doctors' Concert) and the sub committees (branding, visibility & publicity, publications, AV & IT and logistics).

The comments received from the local and foreign Resource Persons, Judges, Chairpersons and participants have been both extremely complimentary and encouraging.

As we conclude this year's Congress, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for making this event a resounding success. Your engagement, enthusiasm, and expertise have truly made a difference and contributed to the dynamic discussions and valuable insights that emerged throughout our time together.

I hope you left this academic extravaganza with renewed inspiration and a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Let's continue to build on the momentum we have created here and carry these insights into our work and the communities.

Thank you once again for your participation and support. We look forward to seeing you at future events and continuing our collective journey towards scholastic excellence.

"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

Henry Ford

Dr Ananda Wijewickrama

MBBS, MD, MRCP(UK), FCCP

Consultant Physician

National Institute of Infectious Diseases

President - SLMA

Activities in Brief

(15th August 2024 – 16th September 2024)

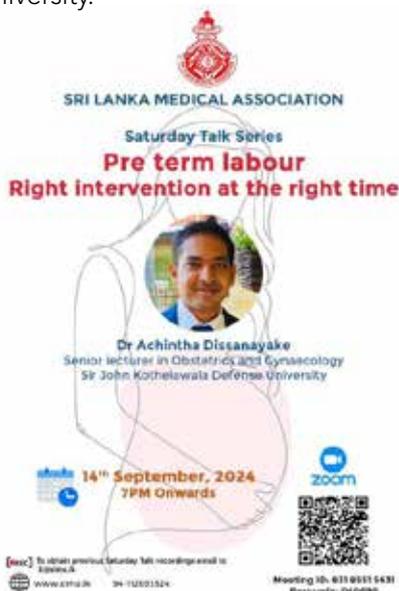
Saturday Talks

Following SLMA Saturday Talks were held.

31st August - *'The best antibiotic in General Practice'* by Dr Lakmal Fonseka, Senior Lecturer, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna & Consultant Physician.



14th September - *'Pre-term labour: Right intervention in the right time'* by Dr Achintha Dissanayake, Senior Lecturer in Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Sir John Kotelawala Defense University.



Seminar

A CME programme was organized by the Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists in collaboration with the Expert Committee on Communicable Diseases the Sri Lanka Medical Association on 23rd August on 'Antimicrobial stewardship'.

The lecture topics and resource persons are as follows;

Dr Malika Karunaratne, President, Sri Lanka College of Microbiologists on 'Introduction to Antimicrobial Stewardship in Hospitals', Dr Lakamal Fonseka, Senior Lecturer, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna on 'Prescribers role in Antimicrobial Stewardship' and Professor Ishan de Zoysa, Professor in Surgery, Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo on 'Surgeon's role in Antimicrobial Stewardship'.



Monthly Clinical Meetings

The clinical meeting for August was held in collaboration with the Sri Lanka College of Psychiatrists on **27th August** on *'I couldn't hear & now I can't see: Management of Functional Neurological Disorders'*.

Dr Hasala Rajartne, Senior Registrar in Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, LRH made a case presentation and Dr Darshani Hettiarachchi, Consultant Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist, LRH discussed the presented case.



Other Activities

A full day interactive hands-on workshop on 'Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods' was held on **10th September** in collaboration with the Institute for Health & Research and Development in Health & Social Care (IRD).

The resource persons were Professor Athula Sumathipala, Director, Institute for Health & Research and Development in Health & Social Care, Professor Tine Van Bortel, Professor of Global Health & Wellbeing DeMont Front University, Lester, UK, ARC Principal Investigator in Public Health & Wellbeing, University of Cambridge, UK, Dr Kalpani Abhayasinghe, Senior Lecturer & Head, Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, KDU & Dr Buddhika Fernando, Lead, Ethics Programme, Institute for Health & Research and Development in Health & Social Care.



Inauguration Ceremony

Dr Kaushi Attanayakege

*SLMA Congress Co-Secretary
(Medical Officer, BH Kantale)*

The Inauguration of the 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress and the SLMA Oration 2024 was held on 16th August 2024 at the Grand Ballroom, Galadari Hotel, Colombo as a day event, a first of its kind for the SLMA with the participation of the past presidents, council members, ministry officials, officials from UN agencies, representatives from other colleges/associations, congress registrants and well-wishers.

Dr Palitha Mahipala, Secretary Health, Ministry of Health graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and Dr Shalala Ahmadova, the Public Health Administrator of WHO country office in Sri Lanka attended as the Guest of Honour.

Two distinguished past presidents of the SLMA, Professor Gita Fernando & Dr Suriyakanthie Amarasekera were awarded Honorary Life Memberships in recognition of the services rendered to their respective fields in medicine and to felicitate them for their immeasurable contributions towards the SLMA.

The much acclaimed SLMA Oration 2024 was delivered by Professor Athula Sumathipala, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry, Keele University, UK as well as Emeritus Professor of Global Mental Health, Kings College, London, UK and Director of Institute for Research and Development in Health and Social Care, Colombo, Sri Lanka on "Global divide in health and research; ethical and governance challenges for low- and middle-income countries".

Drs Nilanka Wickramasinghe, Randula Caldera and Sanuja Ravishanka entertained the audience with three lovely and soothing songs.

The Inauguration ceremony concluded with lunch and fellowship.





SLMA Main Congress

Dr Kaushi Attanayakege

SLMA Congress Co-Secretary
(Medical Officer, BH Kantale)

The 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) was held most successfully from 16th to 18th August 2024 at the Hotel Galadari, Colombo. The event attracted a large audience with numerous foreign and local resource persons participating both online and in person. This was one of the well-attended SLMA congresses in recent years, drawing close to 1500 in total (including the pre-congresses) from diverse specialties in medicine and allied health disciplines. This narrative is a bird's eye view of the academic proceedings during the congress but specific details of Pre-Congress Workshops, Orations, Abstracts and The Doctors' Concert have been left out as there are separate articles on those events.

Following the Inauguration Ceremony and the prestigious SLMA Oration in the morning of 16th August, the main congress commenced with an insightful Keynote Address by Professor Buddhi Marambe, Senior Professor attached to the Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya on 'Food security challenges: Navigating through crises'. After the Keynote Address and the Professor NDW Lionel Memorial Oration, parallel sessions were conducted in Hall A and Hall B. Day 1 featured four plenary sessions and three symposia. The plenary sessions of Day 1 included 'The scope of laser treatment in keeping the glasses away' by Dr Charith Fonseka, 'Indiscriminate use of medicines' by Professor Chandanie Wanigatunga, 'The ageing brain: understanding and preventing cognitive decline' by Professor Varuni de Silva and 'Fast-tracking antimalarial drug discovery' by Professor Niroshini Nirmalan.

The three symposia of Day 1 were on 'Respiratory Medicine' by a panel of respiratory physicians, 'Mitigating the influence of Commercial Determinants of Health (CDoH)' organized by The World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office in Sri Lanka and 'Social protection for management of under nutrition' organized by The World Food Programme (WFP) Country Office in Sri Lanka.

The second day of the congress commenced with the Dr S Ramachandran Memorial Oration, followed by Plenary

Sessions on 'Coronary artery disease assessment' by Dr Wasantha Kapuwatta and 'Critical care: don't forget the patient' by Dr Dilshan Priyankara. The four symposia of the day covered, 'Cardiology - Case based discussions' by a panel of cardiologists, 'Intricacies of managing diabetes' by a panel of endocrinologists, 'Barriers to good hypertension control - beyond medication' by a panel of physicians and 'Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE): advocating and exploring strategies for influencing policy and creating public awareness' organized by The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Country Office in Sri Lanka. The Panel Discussion of the SLMA Congress addressed the important topic 'The health impact by media advertising of cosmetics, nutritional supplements, and food targeting children', featuring experts from the medical and media fields. The highly anticipated SLMA lunchtime debate was on 'Modern medical innovations are primarily profit oriented'. The Guidance Clinic for overseas placements of doctors was held concurrently with the main congress on both Day 2 and Day 3, offering valuable insights from international consultants participating both online and in person. Day 2 concluded with a well-attended interactive case-based discussion titled 'From coma to storm - Mastering thyroid disorders'.

The final day of the congress began with the Dr SC Paul Memorial Oration which was then followed by two Plenary Sessions and five Symposia. The intriguing plenary sessions of Day 3 included 'Hippocrates' touch to algorithmic insight: AI for medical professionals' by Professor Pandula Siribaddana and 'Addressing the concerns of LGBTIQ+ persons and their families' by Dr Kapila Ranasinghe. The symposia of the final day covered 'Enabling a healthy food environment for school children and implementing food regulations' organized by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Country Office in Sri Lanka, 'A fresh look at vaccines' organized by Vaccine and Infectious Diseases Forum of Sri Lanka (VIDFSL), 'Memento Mori: Death and dying in the modern world' by a panel of local and international experts in Medical Humanities, 'Technology enhanced medical education' organized by North Wales Medical School, Bangor University, UK and 'Infectious diseases: the new line of attack' by a panel of world-renowned researchers. The congress concluded with a highly attended workshop on 'Airway, ventilation and renal support for the critically ill patient'. Professor Hasini Banneheke, Vice President of SLMA and Chairperson of the Academic sessions organizing committee 2024,

delivered the closing remarks, marking a successful end to the 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress of the SLMA.

All in all, the scientific and scholastic fare served out during the academic deliberations over the three days of this conference were of the highest level. They incorporated state-of-the-art information on a multiplicity of disorders that affect humans and several other topics on allied subjects that would be of interest to a variegated medical audience. From the feedback that was received from the participants, it was evident that the efforts of the SLMA in furthering knowledge through such a seminal Continuous Professional Development initiative were gratefully acknowledged by the participants.









SLMA Orations

Dr Harini Fernando

Co-ordinator – Orations 2024
(Global Health & Humanitarian Medicine Content
Developer - Médecins Sans Frontières, South Asia)

The Sri Lanka Medical Association Anniversary International Medical Congress traditionally holds four orations annually and for the 137th Congress in 2024 there was a neck-to-neck competition among 10 outstanding orations. The members of the orations committee appointed by the 2024 council independently reviewed the manuscripts of the orations and finalised the Orators unanimously.

Professor Athula Sumathipala delivered the **SLMA oration** which immediately followed the gracious inauguration of the 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress. The oration was themed '*Global divide in health and research; ethical and governance challenges for low and middle income countries*' and highlighted the global disparities in research publications, highlighting the underrepresentation of LMICs in the research literature. Professor Sumathipala further emphasized the initiatives in building research ethics capacity, and discussed the broader impacts stemming from these efforts, which extend beyond mere publication outputs.

The **Professor NDW Lionel Memorial Oration** was delivered by Professor Priyadarshani Galappaththy and was titled '*Availability, affordability and indicators of medicines use in Sri Lanka: status prior to the crises and an analysis to address the challenges*'. Professor Galappaththy drew attention to studies based on the pharmaceutical sector covering all 25 districts. Some of the data was presented for the first time and undoubtedly made advances to the knowledge on the pharmaceutical sector in Sri Lanka.

The **Dr S Ramachandran Memorial Oration** was delivered as the first session on the second day of the congress by Vidya Jyothi Professor Arjuna Priyadarasin De Silva. The oration was titled '*The FibroScan: the stethoscope of the hepatologist*' and the audience gathered out numbered the hall capacity resulting in the most well-attended session of the 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress. Professor De Silva discussed how Fibroscans offer a less invasive and more precise approach to managing liver diseases, potentially revolutionizing hepatology practice, but reminded the need for further research to validate these findings and enhance patient care strategies.

The **Dr SC Paul Memorial Oration** was delivered by Professor Ishan De Zoysa and was based on '*Colorectal cancer: important aspects of aetiology, diagnosis, staging and prognosis*'. Forming the inaugural session of the third and final day of the medical congress the Orator was escorted by the procession comprising the SLMA council members. After relating the many coincidental similarities and relationships between Dr S C Paul and himself, Professor De Zoysa kept the audience enthused by discussing how consumption of six or more cups of brown tea per day and beef consumption was found to be associated with Colorectal cancer and how autoantibody testing was useful in cancer diagnosis and how CT imaging alone could lead to over-staging of tumours. He addressed the significant association between the presence of the K- ras mutation in codon 12 and the occurrence of liver metastasis. Finally, he related the findings of how the circumferential resection margins and three-year survival was similar in those undergoing open surgery and laparoscopic surgery but that the latter had a significantly higher LN harvest.





Research excellence spotlighted: Abstract highlights from SLMA Annual Congress

Dr Sasangi Alwis

SLMA Congress Co-Secretary in charge of abstracts
Medical officer, National Programme for Tuberculosis Control & Chest Diseases (NPTCCD)

The 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress of the Sri Lanka Medical Association saw a strong response to its call for abstracts which started in March 2024 and closed at the end of April 2024. Over 200 abstracts were submitted, reflecting a wide array of innovative research from both national and international contributors.

Each submission was meticulously reviewed by an expert panel consisting of reviewers from the Ceylon Medical Journal, ensuring research of the highest quality was presented at the congress.

Of the submissions, 30 abstracts were selected for oral presentations, showcasing innovative research in a variety of medical fields. The 139 abstracts were selected to be presented as posters, allowing for broader participation and engagement during the congress.

The top abstracts were awarded prizes based on their scientific merit, originality and relevance to different areas of medicine. The following abstracts were recognized for the exceptional contributions:

1. E M Wijerama Award

'Development and validation of a cardiovascular risk prediction model for Sri Lankans'

Mettananda C¹, Sanjeewa JM², Benthota Arachchi TP², Wijesooriya HA², Chandrasena MC², Weerasinghe TR², Solangaarachchige MB¹, Ranasinghe AE¹, Elpitiya I¹, Sammandapperuma R¹, Kurukulasooriya S¹, Ranawaka U¹, Pathmeswaran A¹, Kasturiratne A¹, Kato N³, Wickramasinghe AR¹, Haddela PS², de Silva HJ¹

¹ Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

² Faculty of Computing, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka

³ National Centre for Global Health and Medicine, Toyama, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan

2. S E Seneviratna Award

'Quality of Life of women diagnosed with breast cancer : a qualitative study in a tertiary care Hospital in North Central Province of Sri Lanka'

Jayasekara HADDS¹, Hubaiba TH¹, Ilafi MTA¹, Imaya

KPH¹, Jayapathma JHMYM¹, Jayasekara RMDD¹, Paththinige CS¹

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

3. H K T Fernando Award

'Subculture and violence: a qualitative study in a Sri Lankan Technical College'

Rathnayake N¹, Abhayasinghe K^{2,3}, Silva JD⁴, and Guruge GND^{1,3}

¹Department of Health Promotion, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

²Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka

³Institute for Research and Development in Health and Social Care, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka

⁴Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayawardenepura, Sri Lanka

4. Sir Nicholas Attygalle Award

'Audit and clinician satisfaction survey on the composite rapid Tuberculosis (TB) diagnostic service'

Senanayake NP¹, Herath HDB², Rifhan AS¹, Shanthilatha RP², Pallewatte NC², Cader M², Rajapakshe OBW², Herath HMP³, Bandara RMMS², Bolonne BE², Galagedara WD², Jayasekara H², Karawgoda A¹, Mahathanthila WDTA¹, Jayalatharachchi HR¹, Senevirathna SMP¹, Perera GMM¹, Jayarathna TDSS¹, Dassanayake DMMU¹, Mahendrarathne BMCM¹, Dilshan AS¹, Kanchu AMA¹, Perera J¹

¹Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

²National Programme for Tuberculosis Control and Chest Diseases, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka

³International Organization of Migration, Colombo, Sri Lanka

5. Wilson Peiris Award

'Age-stratified dengue virus seroprevalence in urban and semi-urban areas and relative infection rates'

Perera L¹, Jeewardana KC¹, Pannila PMB¹, Gomes L¹, Karunananda MV¹, Bary FF¹, Ramu ST¹, Danasekara

- S¹, Ogg GS², Gathsaurie NM¹
¹Allergy Immunology and Cell Biology Unit, Department of Immunology and Molecular Medicine, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka
²MRC Translational Immune Discovery Unit, MRC Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
6. **Daphne Attygalle Award – for the best paper in Cancer**
'Comparison of pathological features between young (≤40 years) and older (>40 years) women with breast carcinoma at a tertiary care centre in Sri Lanka'
Gamlaksha DS¹, Wijesinghe HD^{2, 3}, De Silva S^{4,5}, Jayawickrama MMA¹, De Silva MCV^{2,3}
¹National Hospital of Sri Lanka, Colombo, Sri Lanka
²Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
³Centre for Diagnosis and Research in Cancer, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
⁴Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
⁵Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
7. **Sir Frank Gunasekera Award – for the best paper in Community Medicine or TB**
'Prevalence, patterns, expenditures and associated factors of current alcohol use among male security personnel from the Sri Lanka army'
Jayasinghe LV¹, Semage SN², Prathapan S³
¹ Sri Lanka Army Health Services, Sri Lanka
² National Medicines Regulatory Authority, Sri Lanka
³ Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka
8. **Kumaradasa Rajasuriya Award – for the best paper in Tropical Medicine**
'Evolution of antibody responses to SARS-CoV-2, its variants and other Sarbecoviruses over time in Colombo, Sri Lanka'
Bary FF¹, Karunananda MV¹, Jeewandara KC¹, Danasekara S¹, Dasanthi N¹, Gunaratne A¹, Rizan FRM¹, Perera L¹, Nimsha T¹, Tan T², Townsend A², Ogg GS², Malavige GN¹
¹Allergy Immunology and Cell Biology Unit, Department of Immunology and Molecular Medicine, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka
² MRC Translational Immune Discovery Unit, MRC Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom
9. **SPECIAL Prize in Cardiology – for the best paper in Cardiology**
'Development and validation of a cardiovascular risk prediction model for Sri Lankans'
Mettananda C¹, Sanjeewa JM², Benthota Arachchi TP², Wijesooriya HA², Chandrasena MC², Weerasinghe TR², Solangaarachchige MB¹, Ranasinghe AE¹, Elpitiya I¹, Sammandapperuma R¹, Kurukulasooriya S¹, Ranawaka U¹, Pathmeswaran A¹, Kasturiratne A¹, Kato N³, Wickramasinghe AR¹, Haddela PS², de Silva HJ¹
¹ Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
² Faculty of Computing, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka
³ National Centre for Global Health and Medicine, Toyama, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan
10. **S Ramachandran Award – for the best Scientific Communication in Nephrology**
'Detection of toxoplasmosis in end-stage renal patients and renal transplant recipients using PCR and Nested-PCR tests targeting B1 gene: the first study in Sri Lanka'
Weerasooriya GPC¹, Manamperi A², Banneheke BMHA^{1,3}
¹Department of Parasitology, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka
²Molecular Medicine Unit, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
³North Wales Medical School, Bangor University, The United Kingdom
11. **Award for the best presentation in Pharmacology**
'Efficacy and safety of deferoxamine, deferasirox, and Deferiprone triple iron chelator combination therapy for transfusion-dependent -thalassaemia with very high iron overload: a randomised controlled clinical trial'
Premawardhena A^{1,2}, Wanasinghe S², Perera C³, Wijethilaka MN¹, Rajakaruna RHMG⁴, Samarasinghe RANKK⁴, Williams S⁵, Mettananda S^{1,3}
¹ Colombo North Teaching Hospital, Ragama, Sri Lanka
² Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
³ Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
⁴ Department of Radiology, Lady Ridgeway Children's Hospital, Sri Lanka
⁵ Department of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

12. SLMA Prize for the best Poster

'Access delays to essential surgical care among post-operative patients in selected hospitals in Colombo District'

Wijayasinghe HWMJC¹, Tissera HAKN¹, Rathnasiri IMRK¹, Hansani WHS¹, Rishikeshean T¹, Wijesinghe K², Prathapan S³

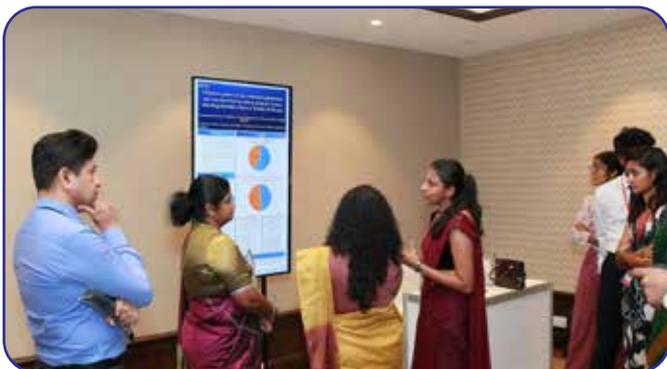
¹Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

²Department of Surgery, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

³Department of Community Medicine, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

The SLMA's annual international medical congress continues to provide a premier platform to Sri Lankan and international medical professionals for knowledge exchange, fostering collaboration and advancement in healthcare.





Medical Debate

Dr Rameshkumar Thevarajah

Organizer of the Medical Debate 2024

(Senior Registrar in Endocrinology, NHSL & Lecturer, Department of Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo)

Medical debate of the Sri Lanka Medical Association was held on 17th August 2024 as a highly anticipated segment of the 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress. The topic for this year was 'Modern medical innovations are primarily profit oriented'. The moderators of the debate were Dr. Sarath Gamini de Silva and Dr. Ruvaiz Haniffa.

Dr Manudi Vidanapathirana, Registrar in Medicine at National Hospital of Sri Lanka was the leader of the proposing team. Other members of the team were Dr Murali Vallipurathan, Consultant Community Physician at Ministry of Health and Mr Lukman Shafi, medical student at Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo.

The opposing team was led by Dr Inosha Udara Alwis, Lecturer in Department of Community Medicine, University of Peradeniya. Other team members were Dr Brammah R Thangarajah, Specialist Nephrologist and Senior Lecturer, Department of Medicine, University of Jaffna and Ms Senara Vidanapathirana, medical student at Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayawardenepura.

The debate was both informative and entertaining to the audience and the debaters showed their fiery debating skills and their sense of humour. The proposing team argued on the points of astronomical profits of the pharmaceutical companies even exceeding that of tech giants like Apple and Google, the manipulation of patent laws, where minor tweaks to medical products prolong exclusivity without delivering significant innovation, and the industry's opportunistic profiteering during the COVID pandemic.

The dissenting team refuted the notion that medical innovations are inherently driven by profit, arguing that external factors like marketing tactics make the innovations profitable. It was stressed that the idea of innovation is for the wellbeing of the society as a whole and strict regulatory frameworks are in place to curb excessive profiteering.

In the end, the proposing team was deemed the winner by the show of hands from the audience.





Sri Lanka Medical Association Doctors Concert: A Memorable Evening of Music and Charity

Dr Nilanka Wickramasinghe

Organizer, SLMA Doctors Concert 2024 and Co- Social Secretary of SLMA

(Lecturer, Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo)

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I reflect on the success of the **Sri Lanka Medical Association Doctors Concert**, held on **August 18th, 2024**, at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. The concert brought together an array of exceptional talent from the medical community, with all proceeds going to the **Maharagama Apeksha Cancer Hospital**.

With tickets priced at just Rs. 1000, and through the generous contributions from the audience, we were able to raise **nearly 40000 rupees** in total. This amount will go directly toward supporting the invaluable work done at Apeksha Cancer Hospital, providing much-needed care for patients battling cancer. This is the first time that the SLMA Doctors' concert was ticketed and donations were asked for a worthy cause. I hope that we can make this a more charitable and meaningful project in the years to come as well.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the **President of the SLMA**, the council members, my co-secretary **Dr. Pramila Senanayaka**, and the Concert Organizing Committee for their unwavering support throughout the organization of this event. A special thank you goes to **Dr. Christo Fernando**, the past organizer, whose experience and guidance were instrumental in ensuring the concert's success.

I am also deeply appreciative of the

dedication and efforts of the **SLMA office staff**, whose work behind the scenes made this event possible.

A particularly warm thank you is extended to the **18 students from the Jaffna Medical Faculty** who traveled all the way from Jaffna to perform at this event. Their contribution added a rich cultural dimension to the evening and was greatly appreciated by the audience. It was also a poignant moment when the National anthem of Sri Lanka was sung by Colombo medical faculty students while they were accompanied by the orchestra of the Jaffna medical faculty students, indicating the harmony between the North and the South of the country.

The compere for the event was Dr. Nimani de Lanerolle who brought her style and flair as usual to the event.

The program of the evening was a testament to the immense talent within our medical community:

1. **National Anthem**: Sung by students of the Jaffna Medical Faculty & the Colombo Medical Choir
2. **Glory of the North**: A cultural fiesta by students of the Jaffna Medical Faculty
3. **"If I were a rich man"** from *Fiddler on the Roof*: Performed by Dr. Sean Amarasekara
4. **Guest Performance**: By Dr. Pradeep Rangana
5. **"Gratitude"**: An original song by Dr. Manella Joseph
6. **"Mere Dholna Sun"**: Dance by Dr. Daki Galapaththi, with singing by Tashiya Pandithasekara and Rahal Walisundara, students from UCFM
7. **"Sadha Lekha"** "සද ලේඛා": Song by Dr. Disna Amaratunga & Dr. Tilan Wijayawardana, with a dance by Dr. Wishwa Perera & Dr. Gayani Wickramasinghe
8. **"A Whole New World"** from *Aladdin*: Sung by Dr. Savinki Rambadagalla & Dr. Lahiru



Manchanayake, with a dance by Dr. Gihani Jayawardhana & Dr. Akhila Nilaweera

9. **"Siriya Sara"** "සිරියා මේ සරා": Song by Prof. Neville Perera with a dance by Sayuri Samarasinghe, Tharindu Wijemanna, Kinkini Abeywickrama, and Sahana Kumarasinghe, students of USJP
10. **"Ithin Man Sada Ibinnada"** "ඉතින්, මං සද ඉඹින්නද?": Duet by Dr. Uditha Kodithuwakku and guest artist Mr. Dayan Witharana, with a dance by Vishva Lekhan & Tharushi Pamodhya, students from UCFM
11. **"Anaagathaye"** "අනාගතයේ": Performed by the Colombo Medical Choir
12. **"Never Enough"**: Performed by the Colombo Medical Choir with Dr. Nilanka Wickramasinghe
13. **"Magic in the Air"**: A magic act by Dr. Thilina Egodage
14. **"Symphony of Youth"**: A fusion song by Dr. Randula Caldera & Dr. Sanuja Ravishanka
15. **"Sudata Sude"** "සුදා සුදේ": Performed by Glass Chains with Dr. Yamuna Rajapakse, accompanied by Manuka Rajapakse (vocals), Minara Rajapakse (Bass), Ashane Malalasekera (Rhythm), Sashrika Vidanagama (Lead), Sithmi Seya (Lead), & Fabian Nissanka (drums)
16. **"Songs of Youth"**: Performed by Dr. Solith Senanayaka and students from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Sri Jayewardenepura
17. **Sing Along & Dance**: Dr. Christo Fernando (drums), Dr. Pramod Kahawevitharana (vocals), Mr. Ray Gomez (bass guitar), Mr. Raju Jayakodi (keyboard) & Dr. Dulanja Senanayake (lead guitar), accompanied by a dance by Dr. Udumbara Sewwandi Kumari
18. **"Lowe Sama"** "ලොවේ සමා": The SLMA Council Song

The highlight of the event was the sing along and dance which got all members of the audience to clap, sing and even dance on the aisle and the stage giving rise to a joyous feeling of elation. The only non-medical performer was guest artist Mr. Dayan Witharana, who waxed eloquently about the talents of the doctors on stage.

The concert was a celebration of art, culture, and community, reminding us that the healing power of music can touch not just the body but the soul as well. I look forward to future events that will continue to bring our medical fraternity together in support of worthy causes.

Thank you once again to all who participated and supported this endeavor.





Photographic Exhibition

Dr Murali Vallipurathan

Convenor of the SLMA Photography Committee
(Consultant Community Physician, Anti Filariasis Campaign, Ministry of Health. Visiting Lecturer, Universities of Jaffna, Peradeniya and Colombo)

Committee Members:

Dr Malik Fernando, Professor Harendra De Silva and Dr Kavinda Amarasinghe

SLMA had the first photographic competition-cum-exhibition at the SLMA Annual Sessions 2024. Sixteen participants submitted 75 photographs as each participant was allowed to submit a maximum of 5 photos. In addition, 25 photos from the collection of the convenor were added to the exhibition to make it 100 photos on display. Photos were judged by independent judges Prof Sampath Seneviratne and Dr Lalith Ekanayake.

The first three places were awarded in all three categories: Animals and Plants, scenery and mobile photos. Nobody was awarded in the category of Health and Medicine.

The names of the winners are as follows:



Categories	Animals & Plants	Scenery	Mobile photos
First place	Dr. Aqil Ahmad Sharifuddeen	Dr. M. T. M. Riffsy	Dr. K. S. Bokaragoda
Second Place	Dr T Jatheesan	Dr. D. P. S. Rupasinghe	Dr. K. S. Bokaragoda
Third place	Dr. P. K. G. Gunathilaka	Dr. M. T. M. Riffsy	Dr. M. F. F. Fazeena

First place winning photos are attached. We hope to improve participation by announcing early, getting sponsors for the exhibition and to publish a coffee table book next year.

I take this opportunity to thank the President of SLMA for deciding to include photographic competition in the annual sessions, Steering committee of the Annual Sessions, committee members of the photographic committee, SLMA staff, SLMA Secretary and Hotel Galadari for their valuable contributions and making this event successful.



The best start for a congress anybody could imagine... Pre-Congress Workshops

Dr Rikaza Lantra

*Event Manager for the 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress
(Medical Officer, Paediatrics', National Institute of Infectious Diseases – NIID)*

Dr Pramitha Mahanama

Co-Secretary SLMA Congress

At the first Council Meeting in January 2024, Vice President Professor Hasini Banneheke was appointed as the Academic Chair of the 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) 2024. She brought forward a new concept to organize Pre-Congress Workshops every month until the main congress in August. Among several objectives, the main aim was to address the needs of the membership, especially those who were serving in remote healthcare institutions with minimal facilities and supervision and others who wished to update their hands-on skills in the management of emergencies. Professor Banneheke invited Dr Pramitha Mahanama, one of the Council Members of the SLMA to become one of the Secretaries of the Congress and organize this series of such workshops, which he accomplished exceptionally well.

Organizing the first one was a challenge with difficulties in getting the best resource persons and the respective specialist colleges, and other stakeholders involved as there were many obstacles. A trauma surgeon from the USA (Dr Anushka Kotalawala Bagga, a friend of Professor Banneheke) who was visiting Sri Lanka devoted some time from her holiday to give the organizers the required boost. The initial workshops took many hours of free time from those who were involved in planning, organizing, and implementing.

With the continuous encouragement of the President of the SLMA, Dr Ananda Wijewickrama, the guidance and close supervision of Professor Banneheke, innovative ideas, skills in event planning, and the meticulous attention to detail by Dr Pramitha Mahanama, together with enormous support of many stakeholders and professional colleges, Council members of the SLMA, academic coordinator (Dr Anjana Jayakody), the office staff of the SLMA and sponsors, we were able to successfully conduct eight workshops from January to August with full-house participation of doctors representing various groups (from pre interns to consultants, Northern to

Southern areas of the country and medical doctors to allied healthcare staff and scientists). The topics for subsequent workshops were chosen based on the requests of participants obtained through the Pre-Congress Feedback Forms. Accepting the invitation made by Professor Banneheke and Dr Mahanama, Dr Rikaza Lantra (a non-council member, and event manager of the Congress) organized the last two workshops. Her immense commitment and dedication made those workshops to run flawlessly. The enthusiasm shown by participants was encouraging. There was a total of 991 participants for the workshops this year with some workshops restricting the registration to a maximum of 40 participants, as the objective was to provide hands-on practical skills).

The SLMA highly appreciates the immense contribution made by the Presidents and the workshop coordinator/organizer of the respective colleges. The resource persons were very generous in sacrificing their time amidst their busiest schedules on a no-fee basis. The list of professional colleges and names of all resource persons of the workshops were published in the Congress Proceedings Book while that list is not reproduced here due to limited space.

Below is the list of workshops we have conducted in 2024.

1. The Initial management of trauma at the emergency department (in collaboration with the accident & orthopedic services of National Hospital of Sri Lanka) and Trauma Secretariat
2. Emergency Point of Care Ultrasound (PoCUS) - hands-on training (in collaboration with the Sri Lanka College of Emergency Physicians)
3. Cardiology and cardiac arrhythmias (in collaboration with the Sri Lanka College of Cardiology)
4. Management of Common Paediatric Emergencies (in collaboration with the Paediatric Intensive Care Chapter of the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians)
5. The non-operative management of fractures and dislocations with hands on practical session on casting techniques (in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Orthopedic Association and National Hospital of Sri Lanka)
6. Colombo Wound Meeting (in collaboration with the College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka)
7. Academic Publications and Manuscript Writing (organized by the Ceylon Medical Journal of the SLMA)



A throwback after a successful ending...

The 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress

Dr Rikaza Lantra

Event Manager of the 137th Anniversary International Medical congress

(Medical Officer, Paediatrics', National Institute of Infectious Diseases – NIID)

Dr Seneeth Peramuna

Senior Registrar in Orthopaedic Surgery, NHSL, Colombo

The 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress of the Sri Lanka Medical Association 2024 concluded with pride on the 18th of August 2024 at Hotel Galadari. It was one of the most successful congresses in the history of SLMA. It was the team effort, from the current President of the SLMA, Dr Ananda Wijewickrama, to the most junior staff member at the SLMA office, which made this possible.

It all started way back during the early part of this year. After the Induction Ceremony of Dr Ananda Wijewickrama, all of us at SLMA initiated the first move for the biggest event of the SLMA in the 2024 calendar.

'It always seems impossible until it is done'.

Of course, there is no better example than the Medical Congress 2024 which proved this axiom. Having a massive task ahead, a Steering Committee was appointed with the Vice President Professor Hasini Banneheke as the Academic Chair of the Congress and a combination of eminent senior consultants who constantly gave their maximum effort to lift the standards of the SLMA and young energetic doctors who wholeheartedly engaged in the event despite their usual routine as members. Task-based sub-committees were created chaired by a senior Council Member with a group of other Council Members supporting the Chair as members. All the names of Chairpersons and Members were published in the Congress proceedings book and the SLMA website.

The efforts towards this big event started with the wonderful series of monthly Pre-Congress Workshops organized by Dr Pramitha Mahanama, Congress Co-Secretary. Witnessing the success of each of them

motivated us more to draw up the plans for the main congress in style. As days ticked by, our steering committee meetings got more interesting and intense with various innovative ideas. From selecting the theme colour to deciding suitable 'Eye-catching' topics to match the year's theme 'Ensuring Equity in Healthcare during Challenging Times' was not easy. Choosing the best topic for the debate, was a never-ending debate within the committee. The lengthy discussions which never failed to include an argument, but ended positively in turn, resulted in a wonderful line-up for the congress.

While the academic subcommittee was busy with the programme, abstracts for poster and oral presentations, finding Chairpersons and best Resource Persons and Judges etc., the SLMA office staff was busy with preparations, while all other committees slowly initiated their tasks not leaving any room for misgivings at the end. The subcommittee for branding/ publicity/ and visibility came up with the most beautiful digital screen which won the admiration of all. The subcommittee for fund raising was an enormous success which gave us wings to plan out this event in such a big scale. The abstract books and proceeding books were wonderfully and flawlessly prepared, well ahead of deadlines by the subcommittee for publications. The subcommittee for logistics geared themselves up during the last month, bringing the 137th Anniversary International Medical Congress of the Sri Lanka Medical Association 2024 to life. As a result of many reasons such as the interesting line-up with useful topics delivered to the level of non-specialist doctors, and the publicity campaigns, the Hotel Galadari Grand Ballroom was filled with registrants during the three days from 16th to 18th August 2024. This year's congress recorded a total of close to 1500 participants including the Pre-Congress Workshops and the Main Congress registrants.

The Inauguration ceremony held on the first day, prior to the commencement of the proper congress, followed the prestigious SLMA traditions and the SLMA oration. Dr Buddhi Marambe presented the Keynote Address. Three other orations were also delivered during the main congress and Dr Harini Fernando (Council Member) and Dr Lahiru Kodithuwakku (Secretary of the SLMA) took up

responsibilities for all aspects of orations, from calling for submissions, to the selection and then presenting on the day. Many United Nations organizations including the WHO joined hands with the SLMA to lighten up the event and Dr Lahiru Kodithuwakku (Secretary of the SLMA) coordinated all the activities pertaining to the UN organizations. All the eminent speakers who were resource persons of the Pre-Congress Workshops and the Main Congress deserve credit for much of the success we witnessed.

I, being the event manager happily faced all difficulties due to the unexpected crowd each day with my colleague Dr Seneeth Peramuna who helped me throughout in managing the situation. While I was able to rely on Seneeth, and with Dr Ashwini de Abrew and Dr Sumithra Tissera helping out on hall coordination, the congress continued flawlessly making all of us feel that the long hours of discussions and planning, sleepless nights and endless efforts paid off really well. The IT coordinator Mr Damith Deshan made sure that his part was played ever so scrupulously with the help of our academic coordinator Dr Anjana Jayakody and the AV team. The support received from the President himself and academic Chair Professor Hasini Banneheke during all three days was immense. The backup given by Dr Kaushi Attanayakage, Congress Co-Secretary and Dr Lahiru Kodithuwakku, the Secretary of SLMA was always comforting. The team of comperes led by Dr Nimani Lanarolle did a splendid job, not forgetting the volunteer doctors who helped in coordination during the three days who fulfilled their duties to the maximum levels. Under the overall leadership of Professor A. Pathmeswaran and invaluable support from the Editors and Reviewers of the Ceylon Medical Journal of the SLMA, Dr Sasangi Alwis, Congress Co-Secretary managed the free papers (poster and oral presentations) beautifully. This is an area that many unforeseen issues arose every year due to the considerable number of abstracts that had to be managed during the congress. However, we are thrilled that there were no concerns raised at all this year. The Free Paper Judges and Chairpersons for all congress sessions were experts in relevant fields representing all professional colleges in Sri Lanka,

On the last day of the Congress, the SLMA doctor's concert was held giving everyone the opportunity to leave their stresses out, let their hair down, and enjoy the accomplishment after the arduous work of the last 8 months. There are so many individuals to thank by name, but I avoided doing so as I did not want to make the mistake of missing any one of them. However, I highly appreciate the support of all of them and this whole experience was a truly memorable combined effort which will last a lifetime.



The lighter side of organizing the congress: The backdrop saga

Dr Kalyani Guruge

Chair - Branding/ Publicity and Visibility
(Consultant Paediatrician)

When Congress Chair of SLMA 2024 who also holds the position of Vice President of the present council messaged me, 'Dear Madam, I'm planning to hand over to you a major portion of the SLMA congress. I have made you the chair of the subcommittee on branding/ publicity/and visibility of the annual congress & hope you will accept my invitation on behalf of SLMA'. I perceived this as a cordial invitation, but I recognized this as an order in disguise. Two consequences were to happen if I said 'Yes', my long-awaited visit to see my relatives in Vancouver would be postponed to August. Theme of the year 'Ensuring Equity in Healthcare during Challenging Times' would apply to me as 'Balancing Mental Health During Challenging Times' as chair of visibility committee in itself was a challenge.

This turned out to be worse in some aspects. Congress scheduled for July was to actually happen in August. September is not the best of months to visit Canada. As a person generally considered as a 'cool head' balancing mental health never became an issue.

In my new job of developing material to make congress more visible, I was to get support for IT from Parenthrive a company who offered to help SLMA.

All of us as medical professionals have attended numerous events of inaugurations, inductions, scientific meetings both locally & internationally but I have barely paid attention to designs of flyers, backdrops or other material other than at College of Paediatricians. As Paediatricians we always decorate our material with happy cartoon figures. I always considered the people who were responsible for these as tech wizards. Now I'm on my way to find one or maybe become one.

I generally look at myself as one with levity: gravity - 50:50. The responsibility bestowed on me changed this balance. As my first step I became very serious about depicting the theme in our material but requests for ideas didn't receive any response.

Weather became nasty during this time of the year & being interested in nature & photography I thought why not use an image of a sturdy tree swaying in a storm to depict challenging times or turmoil in lives of young, old, male, female, different skin colour, various professionals, healthy normal or with special needs.

From the beginning I was warned by congress chair that Secretary, SLMA is very keen to avoid red colour in the material as red is not easy on the eye. Congress chair promoted the idea of selecting colours from peacock feathers. With few inputs from me & other members of the team Vindula from Parenthrive developed few flyers. There was a tree swaying in the storm shown as branches bent to a side, but the tree didn't look like a tree caught in a storm. There was a glum looking male doctor with a Steth around his neck, prim looking nurse in uniform, a girl with hair cascading down who later became pregnant, ambulance 1990 in the background, a plane taking off depicting citizens leaving the country, pregnancy was terminated & she became a young girl again, a man was in a wheelchair & few cartoon kids' faces appeared & erased from time to time. Vindula kept on changing without any protest & we also commented & changed as we wished.

At one point there was a strong query whether we should depict the theme on the flyers & why not nature, scenes from countryside, Colombo landscape or skyscape. I kept my sanity looking at the changes. At one point there were figures from Aragalaya in the background, herd of Elephants in the centre panel, airplane taking off with doctors migrating to foreign lands, more female figures as present day medical profession is dominated by females & correct gender balance became a political statement.

Before I lost my sanity, we moved on to preparing flyers calling for abstracts. Anjana our tech savvy pre intern produced very attractive & unique flyers using facade of the Wijerama House / SLMA building.

Again we were back to flyers & backdrops using colours from peacock feathers, the hues changed from sea green to turquoise to blue which rapidly turned to purple & magenta. A peacock looking at the screen would not have been able to identify that colours originally came from its feathers. I was in a sweat thinking of the day this came as a backdrop at the inauguration.

'When you want something, all the Universe conspires in helping you to achieve it'.

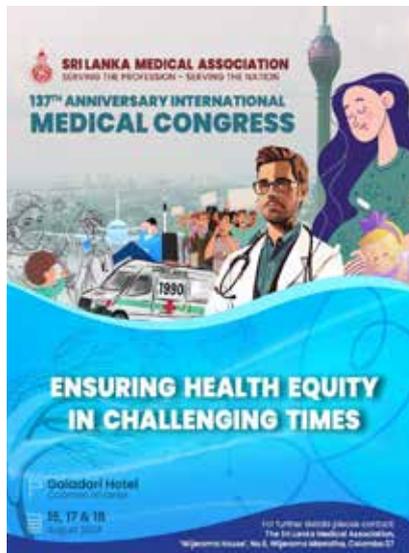
Paulo Cohelo

For Hasitha Tissera to visit Pakistan to train Paediatricians in Dengue management, to make friends with those Paediatricians who will send a message to Hasitha to meet him in Colombo at SAPA meeting, for Hasitha not being in the country & send a message to his wife, Sumithra Tissera whether she could ask me or Dr Weeraman to

locate this paediatrician, for two of us to go in search of him among a crowd of over 600 delegates, for Professor Sharman Rajindrarajith to introduce me to head of Pakistani delegation & requested him to help us, when head of Pakistani delegation located & informed me, when this Paediatrician walked in while I was talking to the head, when we decided to take a photo with him as evidence that we met him, when the photo was taken with a painting in the background, when Sumithra looking at the photo picked up the colours in the painting as good for theme colours & messaged me & we used those colours in doing a very attractive backdrop, wouldn't you consider that Universe had a part to play.

Google photos helped us with depicting equity. The apple tree became a cashew tree with ripe cashews being picked by an old man, a couple with pregnant wife & a man in a wheel chair all sitting or standing on blocks of different heights.

A narrative of developing a backdrop using peacock feathers for SLMA congress & story of Tree of Challenging Times changing over to Tree of Equity.



Academic sessions organizing committee 2024

Dr Ananda Wijewickrama - President, SLMA
Professor Hasini Banneheke - Vice President & Academic Chair
Dr Lahiru Kodithuwakku - Honorary Secretary, SLMA
Dr Kaushi S Attanayakege - Congress Co – Secretary
Dr MNGGD Pramitha - Congress Co – Secretary
Dr LSM Alwis - Congress Co – Secretary
Professor Jennifer Perera
Dr BJC Perera
Dr M Sarath Gamini de Silva
Professor Anuja Abayadeera
Dr Surantha Perera
Professor Ishan De Zoysa
Professor A Pathmeswaran
Dr Ruvaiz Haniffa
Dr Sumithra Tissera
Dr Rameshkumar Thevarajah
Dr SR Lantra
Dr Praveen Weeratunga

SLMA 137th 6 Anniversary International Medical Congress, 2024 Sub-committees

Fundraising and finances

Dr Ananda Wijewickrama
Dr Manilka Sumanathilake
Dr Surantha Perera
Dr Vinya Ariyaratne
Dr Christo Fernando
Dr HSRP De Silva
Dr Anver M Hamdani
Dr Iyanthi Abeywickreme
Professor Dakshitha Wickramasinghe

Branding/ Publicity and Visibility

Dr. Kalyani Guruge
Dr. Padma Gunaratne
Dr. Nimani De Lanerolle
Professor Indika Karunathilake
Dr Nilanka A Wickramasinghe
Mr Vindula Dissanayaka

Publications

Dr Sumithra Tissera
Dr Harini Fernando
Dr M Sarath Gamini De Silva
Dr BJC Perera
Dr HSRP De Silva
Dr Ashwini de Abrew
Dr Rameshkumar Thevarajah
Dr CLK Atapattu

AV&IT

Dr Saveen Semage
Dr SR Lantra
Dr Anjana S Jayakody

Logistics

Dr Pramila Senanayake
Dr Saveen N Semage
Dr Nimani de Lanarolle
Dr Harini Fernando
Dr RMMK Namal Rathnayake
Dr PDO Seneeth Dilanka
Dr SR Lantra

Coordinators

Dr V Murali – Photographic Exhibition
Dr Nilanka A Wickramasinghe – Doctors' Concert
Dr Harini Fernando – Orations

Ex-officio in all committees

Dr Ananda Wijewickrama
Professor Hasini Banneheke
Dr Lahiru Kodithuwakku
Dr Kaushi S Attanayakege



CONGRATULATIONS

To our council members on being ranked among the Top 2% of Scientists in the World in 2024



Professor Saroj Jayasinghe



Professor Samath Dharmaratne



Professor Senaka Rajapakse

Featuring in the Elsevier August 2024 data-update for "Updated science-wide author databases of standardized citation indicators"



Sri Lanka Medical Association

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Call for applications for post of SLMA President Elect 2025

The SLMA elects a President-Elect at its Annual General Meeting every year in December to take over as President thereafter.

Applications are hereby invited for the post of President-Elect for 2025 from SLMA Life Members of over five (5) years duration, proposed and seconded by SLMA Life Members.

Application forms may be obtained from the SLMA Office during working hours.

The applications should reach the Honorary Secretary, SLMA on or before 11th October 2024.

Dr Lucian Jayasuriya
Past Presidents' Representative to the SLMA Council
13th June 2024

World Patient Safety Day, 17 September 2024

Dr Upuli Wijemanna

Director Healthcare Quality and Safety, MoH

Dr D S Manatunga

Deputy Director Healthcare Quality and Safety, MoH

Dr Sashiprabha Nawarathne

Consultant Community Physician

Directorate of Healthcare Quality and Safety, MoH

World Patient Safety Day is an opportunity to raise public awareness and foster collaboration between patients, health workers, policymakers and healthcare leaders to improve patient safety. It is celebrated globally every year on the 17th of September. This year the theme is "Improving diagnosis for patient safety" with the slogan "Get it right, make it safe!", highlighting the critical importance of correct and timely diagnosis in ensuring patient safety and improving health outcomes.

Resolution WHA72.6 and the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030 highlight the need for ensuring the safety of diagnostic processes. The global action plan encourages countries to adopt strategies that reduce diagnostic errors, which often arise from a combination of cognitive and system factors that impact the recognition of patients' key signs and symptoms, and the interpretation and communication of their test results. The magnitude of diagnostic errors is profound, accounting for nearly 16% of preventable harm across health systems. With most adults likely to face at least one diagnostic error in their lifetime, substantial work needs to be done to improve the safety of diagnostic processes.

Objectives of World Patient Safety Day 2024

1. Raise global awareness of errors in diagnosis contributing to patient harm and emphasize the pivotal role of correct, timely and safe diagnosis in improving patient safety.

2. Give prominence to diagnostic safety in patient safety policy and clinical practice at all levels of health care, aligned with the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030.
3. Foster collaboration among policy-makers, health care leaders, health workers, patient organizations, and other stakeholders in advancing correct, timely and safe diagnosis.
4. Empower patients and families to actively engage with health workers and healthcare leaders to improve diagnostic processes.

World Patient Safety Day 2024 proposes a wide range of activities, such as national campaigns, social media activities, advocacy and technical events, to be organized on and around 17 September. In this regard, the Directorate of Healthcare Quality and Safety, of the Ministry of Health held an island-wide competition on best practices among healthcare institutions. The received best practices were short-listed and judged by an expert panel to select three best practices each from the Line and Provincial ministry categories. The winners were awarded at the World Patient Safety Day National Event, which was held on the 7th of September 2024, at Marino Beach Hotel Colombo with the patronage of the Secretary of Health, and the participation of Ministry of Health officials, representatives from islandwide hospitals, regional and provincial directors of health services and patient groups.

Further, a signature mark of the global campaign is lighting up iconic monuments in the colour orange. This year the Ministry of Health will illuminate the iconic Colombo Municipal Council Building on the 17th of September as a symbol of our dedication to improving diagnosis for patient safety in Sri Lanka.





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The Official Newsletter of the Sri Lanka Medical Association

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