



# SLMA NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SRI LANKA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

JULY 2018, VOLUME 11, ISSUE 07



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Shifting Focus from  
Diseases to Patients:  
Today's Vision,  
Tomorrow's Reality

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE SRI LANKA MEDICAL  
ASSOCIATION

NO. 6, WIJERAMA MAWATHA, COLOMBO 7.

TEL: +94 112 693324  
E MAIL: OFFICE@SLMA.LK

SLMA News Editorial  
Committee 2018

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Dr. Amaya Ellawala

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# President's Message

Dear Member,

I am pleased to inform you that all activities in relation to the 131<sup>st</sup> Anniversary International Medical Congress, with the exception of Post Congress Workshop 2 on Communication skills: Training of trainers due to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2018, concluded on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

In summary, the sessions comprised of 8 Pre Congress Workshops, 13 Symposia, 12 Guest Lectures, 3 Plenary Lectures, 4 Orations, 1 Key Note address, 9 Free Paper sessions, Poster presentations, Doctors Concert and a thought provoking debate. The Ceylon Medical Journal published the abstracts of the oral and poster presentations as a supplement (Vol 63, Supp 1, July 2018).

On behalf of the entire membership I express my gratitude to our Chief Guest Prof. Dinesh Bhugra, President, British Medical Association, our two Guests of Honour – Prof. Donald Li, President-Elect, World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA), Prof. Vajira H.W. Dissanayake, President, Commonwealth Medical Association, all invited Sri Lankan and overseas resource persons, Chairpersons, Judges and volunteer medical students from the Faculty of Medical Sciences University of Sri Jayawardenepura, for taking time off their busy schedules to contribute towards the 2018 Congress. The support received from the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine and The National Science Foundation (NSF), The World Health Organization (WHO) and all our Platinum, Silver Sponsors and all other sponsors, are acknowledged with gratitude.

The Congress Organizing Committee 2018 needs special mention. Prof. Arirane Gnanathan (Vice President and Chair - Academic Committee) along with Dr. Praveen Weerathunga (Convenor - Academic Committee) and Dr. Christo Fernando (Vice President and Chair - Social Committee) along with Dr. Pramilla Senanayake and Dr. Preethi Wijegoonewardene (the two Social Secretaries) are thanked for coordinating and bringing



together the academic and social aspects of the congress seamlessly. The herculean task of evaluating the high quality research papers submitted for presentation at the congress was silently and efficiently undertaken by Prof. Varuni de Silva and Prof. A. Pathmeswaran (Editors of the Ceylon Medical Journal) and ably assisted by a core group of anonymous reviewers. The Information Technology support rendered to the abstract submission and review process in particular and the Congress in general was overlooked by the ever active IT team at the SLMA led by Dr. Achala Jayatilleke (Treasurer SLMA) and Dr. Pamod Amarakoon, ably assisted by Mr. Vihanga Silva our resident IT specialist. Dr. Amaya Ellawala, the Editor of the SLMA News Letter was responsible for the design, compilation and timely release of the programme book among numerous other editorial tasks. The inputs received from all other members of the Committee contributed towards the end product the SLMA was able to deliver as the 131<sup>st</sup> Anniversary International Medical Congress under the theme 'Shifting focus from diseases to patients: Today's vision, tomorrow's reality'.

The SLMA Office Staff led by our Administrative Officer Mr. D.S. Perera and comprising of Ms. Jayarani Tennakoon, Mrs. Nirmala Alahakoon, Mrs. Nadeera Wijesekera, Ms. H.G.S. Maduka, Mr. S. Samararatne, Mr. A. Rajendra and Mr. Justin Silva played their usual silent but super-efficient and highly effective role towards the 2018 Congress. The assistance received from Ms. Thanuja and Dr. Chamiska, staff of the NIROGI Lanka project and Dr. Chathuri of the Palliative Care and End of Life Task Force of the SLMA is acknowledged. A special young doctor at the SLMA needs special mention for her outstanding dedication and contribution toward the Congress. Dr. Kaushi Attanayake without exaggeration coordinated

every single aspect of the Congress both within the SLMA and outside of it, which made the decision making process on Congress related matters so much more easy and efficient.

As per the SLMA articles of association there is only one person responsible and accountable to the membership for organizing, arranging, convening meetings, conferences, lectures and seminars. This official is also tasked with conducting all correspondence of the association and also supervising work of the association. The SLMA articles of association identifies this official as the Honorary General Secretary of the SLMA. Dr. Hasini Banneheke our Honorary General Secretary for 2018 did not only perform these duties to the highest possible standards but she went well beyond them in putting together this year's Congress. The genuine enthusiasm, dedication to the task, attention to detail (which were at times, to put it mildly, annoying!!!), team spirit, organizational ability, and above all, her people managing skills made the conference what all of us were able to be a part of. Thank you Hasini, for your outstanding performance in making the vision of the 2018 SLMA Congress a reality.

Though we have completed the high point of our tenure as your Council we are very much aware that we still have a long way to go. We will (after a well-earned mini break!!!!) be continuing the routine academic, sporting and social activities which have been pre planned for the remainder of 2018. I look forward to your continued support in this endeavour.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Ruvaiz Haniffa**  
**President**  
**SLMA**

# Dengue: Recent research findings

## Centre for Dengue Research, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Prof. Neelika Malavige,  
Professor, Department of Microbiology,  
Director Centre for Dengue Research,  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

The Centre for Dengue Research (CDR) at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura is a state-of-the-art research facility which pioneers research in the pathogenesis of dengue infection. Following is a brief account of the latest research activities conducted by the CDR.

### 1. Drug discovery for treating dengue

#### a) Clinical trial on rupatadine

Vascular leakage that leads to pleural effusions, ascites and shock is the hallmark of severe dengue. We identified a potent lipid mediator of vascular leak, called platelet activating factor (PAF) and found that blockade of PAF led to reduction in vascular leakage (work done by Dr. Chandima Jeewandara for his doctoral thesis). This subsequently led to a Phase II Clinical Trial at the National Infectious Diseases Hospital, where we found that rupatadine, which is a PAF receptor blocker showed some promise in reduction of vascular leakage and complications in dengue, when given early (Malavige et al, Scientific Reports, 2018). We have now embarked on another Phase II Trial, which we are conducting in the OPD of the National Infectious Diseases Hospital (NIDH), where we are carrying out a double blind, placebo controlled, randomized clinical trial to determine the efficacy of rupatadine when given early ( $\leq 3$  days of illness). Due to the strict enrolment criteria, we have only recruited 1/3 of the number of patients that we have planned to recruit.

#### b) Discovery of potential plant extracts that can be used to treat acute dengue.

Apart from rupatadine, we have been interested in possible plant extracts, especially used in ayurvedic medicine, for its possible benefit in dengue. Phospholipase A2 is the main inflammatory lipid enzyme, responsible for generation

of PAF. As PAF was found to be a predominant mediator of vascular leakage, we were interested to discover possible plant extracts that could inhibit the inflammatory enzymes - called phospholipase A2 - that are responsible for the generation of PAF.

In order to identify such plant extracts, we screened several plants for possible inhibition of phospholipase A2 activity. This work is done as a part of the doctoral thesis of Ms. Dayangi Hamalika, also in collaboration with Prof. Ajith Abeysekara (emeritus Professor of Chemistry, University of Sri Jayewardenepura). We have identified a plant, which is currently used to treat fevers and has very potent phospholipase A2 inhibitory activity. The phospholipase A2 inhibitory activity of this plant extract was found to be even more potent than several commercial inhibitors that are used in the laboratory. Currently we are further narrowing down the exact structure of this molecule. In addition, we are carrying out further studies to evaluate its safety before we can embark on clinical trials and before we apply for relevant patents.

### 2. Investigation of the role of dengue antibodies in the pathogenesis of dengue

Dengue NS1 antigen, is a component of the dengue virus, which is secreted by dengue infected cells and circulates in the body independent of the virus. This circulating NS1 is often used in antigen detection tests (dengue NS1 antigen test) to identify patients with acute dengue infection.

We and others have found that NS1 alone (independent of the virus) has many pathogenic effects in acute dengue by inducing production of inflammatory cytokines and other mediators. Although antibodies to other dengue virus components such as the envelope and PrM proteins have been studied, so far no



studies have been done on the antibodies generated to dengue NS1 in humans. This is important since the recently licensed vaccine by Sanofi Pasteur (Dengvaxia®), does not generate NS1 antibodies and some have implied that this is one reason for the lower than expected vaccine efficacy. However, some have found that certain antibodies generated against dengue NS1 can activate complement and lead to immuno-pathology in experiments carried out on cell lines and mouse models.

Since in vitro studies and mouse studies might not reflect what is happening in acute dengue infection, we proceeded to study the role of NS1 antibodies in patients with acute dengue. We have found that NS1 antibodies rise in patients with dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) with the onset of the critical phase. This rise was not seen in patients with dengue fever (DF). In addition, the region of the NS1 recognized by those with DF were very different to the regions in NS1 recognized by those with DHF. It appears that those with DHF, recognize non-neutralising, disease enhancing regions of the NS1, which lead to disease pathogenesis. This knowledge would be critical in developing safe and effective dengue vaccines.

### 3. Why do only some individuals develop severe dengue?

The majority of individuals who develop both primary and secondary dengue infection, develop mild or asymptomatic dengue, which goes unnoticed.

Contd. on page 06

## Dengue: Recent Research...

It has been estimated that during a given epidemic only 10% to 25% of infected individuals become symptomatic. Therefore, a key area of our research has been to try and understand why some develop very severe forms of dengue, whereas most have asymptomatic or mild infection. Monocytes and dendritic cells are the cell types predominantly infected by the dengue virus.

Experiments carried out by us have shown that the monocytes of those who experience severe dengue, respond to the dengue virus in a remarkably different manner than those who develop asymptomatic dengue. The monocytes of individuals who had experienced severe dengue in the past, respond in a very detrimental manner to the dengue virus, by producing many different inflammatory mediators, even in the healthy state. In contrast, those who had past asymptomatic dengue, respond in a very healthy manner and produce cytokines that are involved in eliminating the virus without damaging the host. Therefore, our data show that individuals appear to 'inherently' respond to the dengue virus in a good or bad manner, which subsequently leads to development of asymptomatic, mild or severe dengue. This information is important in vaccine design in order to use the correct adjuvants to stimulate the necessary pathways and develop drug targets that will inhibit activation of the inflammatory pathways by the virus.

### 4. Identification of biomarkers to identify patients who develop severe dengue

It is very well known that only some individuals develop severe dengue. However, once admitted to the ward or while being treated in the community, all individuals with a known/possible dengue infection have to be monitored, as it is not possible to determine who will develop DHF or not.

We have been trying to identify a urinary biomarker to identify patients who develop severe disease and we are

currently validating it in a larger patient group. This urinary biomarker, which is a product of mast cell activation, was found to be very much higher in patients with DHF, when compared to those with DF, very early during infection. Although our initial results look promising, unless these biomarkers are evaluated in very large populations, their validity cannot be ascertained.

### 5. Febrile infections in Sri Lanka

We experience many epidemics of 'viral flu' and we have little insight into which viruses cause these. Although we might identify the virus family in some instances, most of the time we have not identified the exact pathogen.

Therefore, in order to understand the burden of infection caused by dengue and also to identify other causes of viral flu such as chikungunya, enteroviruses and other flaviviruses, we embarked on a study to identify the causes of viral fevers. Currently, we are conducting it at the NIDH and hope to expand this study to other provinces in Sri Lanka. The Victoria Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL), Melbourne, is helping us to identify other causal viruses and possibly even new virus species. We found that approximately 4% of those with a dengue like illness last year, who were recruited from the OPD of NIDH, had chikungunya and not dengue. This is despite some patients having platelet counts of <100,000. As a part of this study we have also been able to monitor the change in the dengue virus serotypes and found the emergence of dengue serotype 3 since January this year.

We have been studying clinical features of dengue in relation to different dengue virus serotypes, we were able to report that patients with DENV2 infection (last year's epidemic) entered the critical phase significantly earlier ( $p < 0.0001$ , median = 3, IQR 3 to 4 days) when compared to those with a DENV1 infection (median 5, IQR 4 to 5 days). In addition, those with DENV2 were more likely to develop DHF compared to those with DENV1 infection (Wijewickrama A, SLMA sessions, 2017). In

addition, we also found that those infected with the DENV2 strain last year, were more likely to develop significant bleeding and require blood transfusions.

### 6. Identify the contribution of dengue and other flaviviruses in development of neurological manifestations

It is well-known that dengue causes encephalitis and other neurological complications. However, as the burden of neurological infections due to dengue is unknown, and also since the contribution of dengue and other flaviviruses to the development of diseases such as Guillian Barre Syndrome (GBS) and transverse myelitis is not known, we proceeded with this study, in collaboration with Prof. Thashi Chang, from Department of Clinical Medicine, University of Colombo. We found that approximately 50% of patients with encephalitis, 55% of patients with transverse myelitis and 25% of those with GBS were caused by a flavivirus. Due to the cross-reactive nature of antibodies to dengue, Japanese encephalitis, West Nile Virus and Zika, it is difficult to differentiate the causative virus by antibody assays alone. Therefore, we are obtaining assistance from the Victoria Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory, Melbourne, to further identify the viruses in transverse myelitis and encephalitis. The GBS study is carried out as a part of a large collaborative study in the South Asian and South-East Asia region, which is headed by investigators in Singapore.

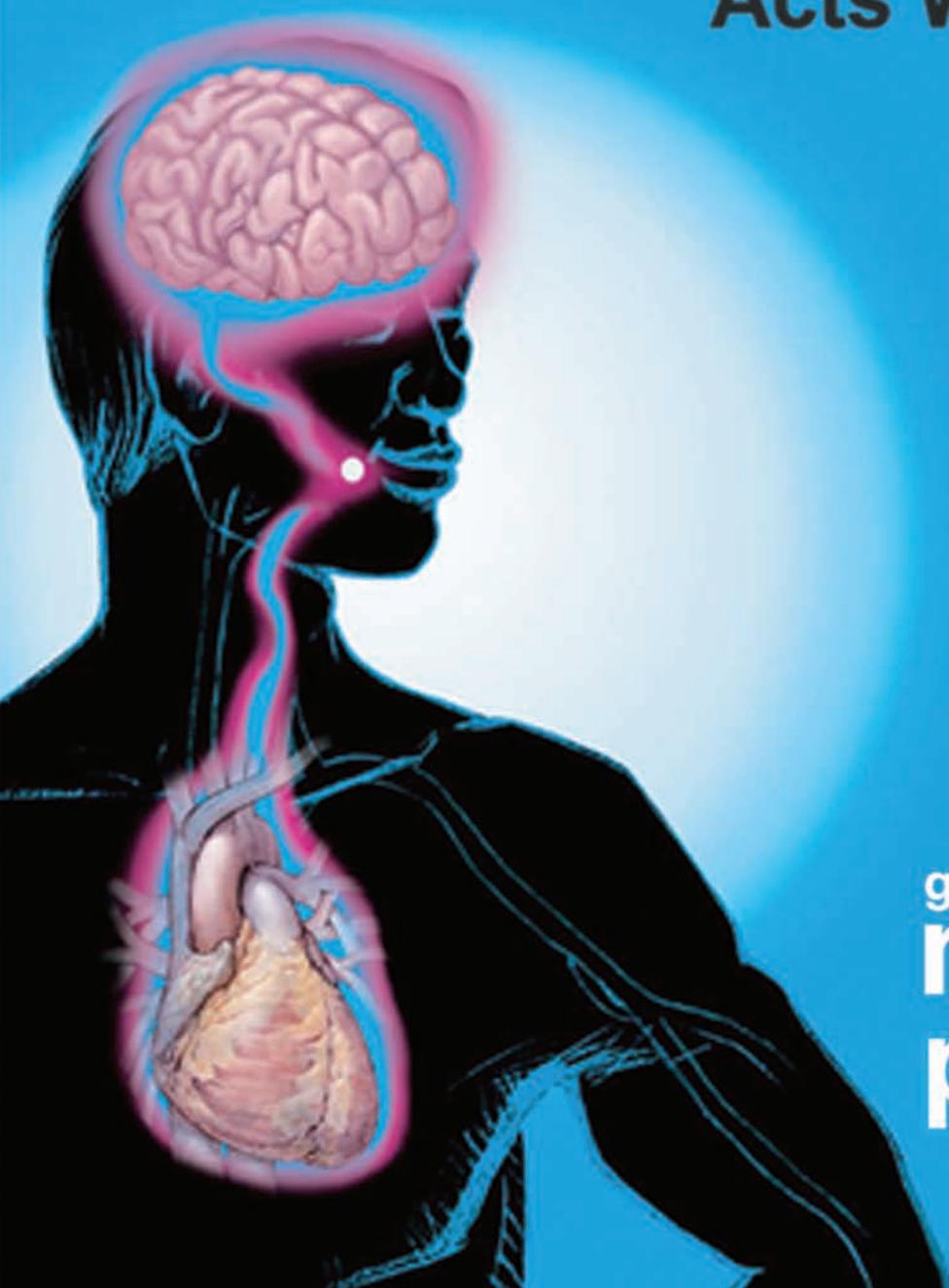
### Other research activities

Apart from the activities described above, led by Dr. Ananda Wijewickrema, we are also in the process of carrying out a clinical trial to identify the best treatment method for dengue associated vaginal bleeding and also the possible benefits of blood transfusions in patients with dengue apart from it being a volume expander.

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## Dengue: Recent research...

We are also conducting studies on T cells and have obtained very exciting results, but have not described them here, as we felt that this would not interest the general readership of this newsletter.

The CDR receives funding by many organizations such as the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and grants from the National Science Foundation and National Research Council, Sri Lanka and the National Institute of Health (NIH), USA. The

state-of-the-art research laboratory, which is now located at the new laboratory of the Department of Family Medicine, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, is regularly visited by many undergraduate and postgraduate students from overseas and also visiting professors from University of Oxford. We have a very dedicated group of postgraduate students, post-doctoral scientists and research assistants working around the clock to find long

lasting solutions for dengue infection. We collaborate with several local organizations and with international research centres such as the MRC Human Immunology Unit, University of Oxford; Victoria Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory, Melbourne; Singapore Immunology Network and National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan.

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### **PRESS RELEASE by the Sri Lanka Medical Association on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2018**

#### **Position Statement of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) on the current situation pertaining to the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC)**

As the apex professional medical association representing all grades of doctors in both the state and private sector in Sri Lanka, the SLMA is concerned about the current situation in the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC).

We note that the current situation prevalent in the SLMC is not an isolated event or incident but a culmination of a series of events and processes occurring over a period of time. These have had their origins in the interpretation and implementation of the Medical Ordinance (Chapter 105).

The SLMA notes the following;

1. The primary purpose and duty of the Medical Ordinance and the Sri Lanka Medical Council established under it is to act and protect the interests of the Sri Lankan public.
2. The Medical Ordinance also regulates the academic, professional and ethical standards of medical practitioners, dentists and other healthcare professionals.
3. The present composition of the SLMC as per the current ordinance consists exclusively of medical practitioners other than one member representing the dental profession. This may have led to a misperception that adequate action has not been taken against medical professionals alleged to have committed offences.

While self-regulation of professionals through regulatory professional bodies is most desirable such self-regulation should not be in the self-interest of the professionals but should be in the interest of the general public and the healthcare system.

In this context the SLMA is of the view that the composition of the SLMC needs revision to protect the interest of the Sri Lankan public while preserving professional self-regulation and the efficiency of the healthcare system.

In light of the recent development, the SLMA suggests the following;

- a. Ensure continuity of the functions of the SLMC to provide academic, professional and ethical leadership to the medical, dental and other healthcare professionals in Sri Lanka.
- b. Review the Medical Ordinance (Chapter 105) with a specific focus on the composition of the SLMC.

**To achieve the above, we propose that a Committee comprising all stake holders be set up to facilitate the consideration and identification of the issues pertaining to the Medical Ordinance and propose solutions in a timely manner. The SLMA is willing to provide a facilitator forum to the functioning of the proposed Committee.**



**Dr. Ruvaiz Haniffa**  
On behalf of the Council of the SLMA

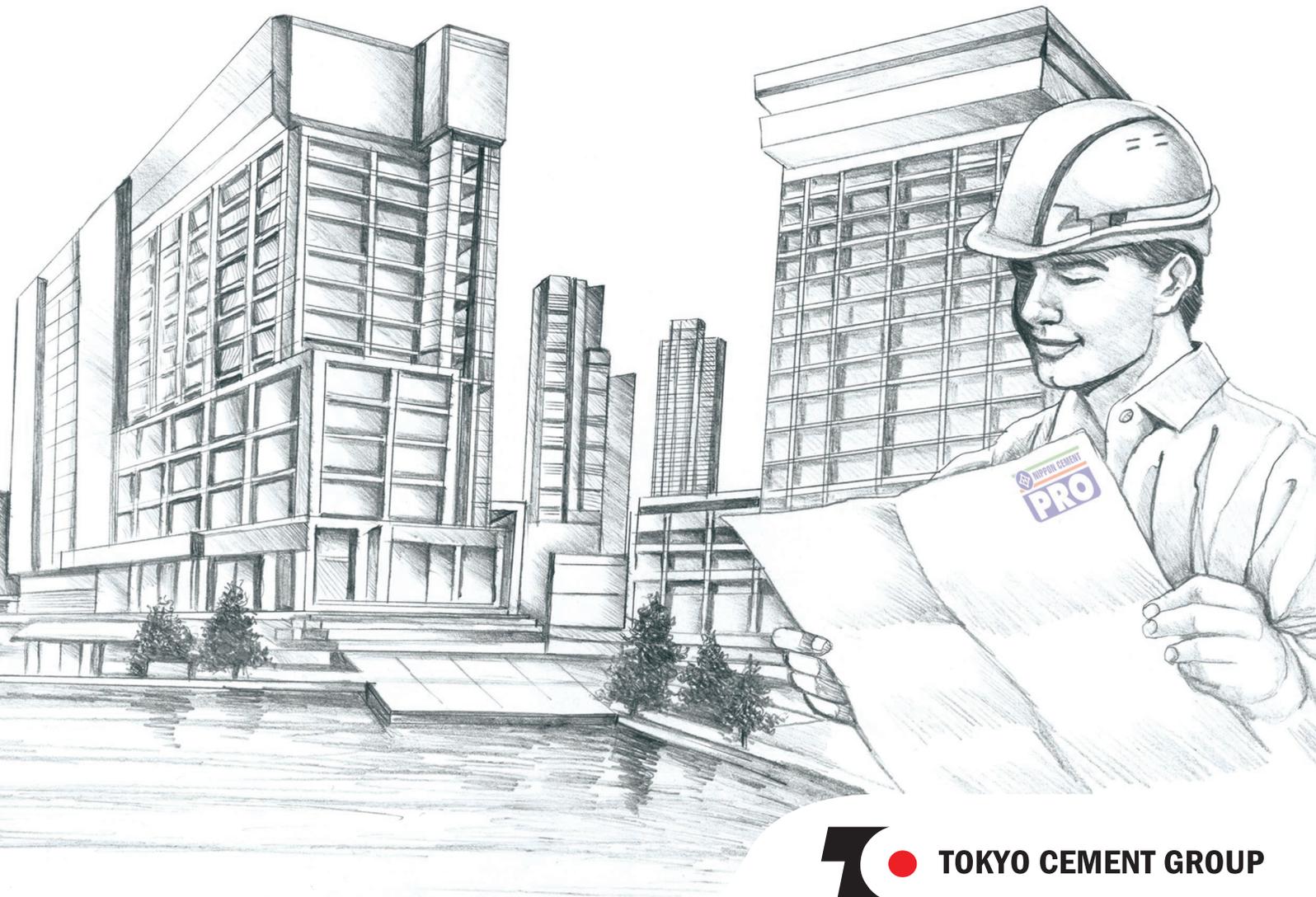


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# 131<sup>st</sup> Anniversary International Medical Congress

## Pre-congress workshops

The 131<sup>st</sup> Anniversary International Medical Congress of the Sri Lanka Medical Association commenced with eight pre-congress workshops conducted during the months of June and July, 2018. Further details of these workshops are featured within this issue of the newsletter.

### Pre-Congress Workshop

1

## Second Annual Mini Congress on Wound Care

Dr. Yasas Abeyewickreme  
Consultant Plastic Surgeon  
Colombo South Teaching Hospital

**W**ound care is a rapidly developing field in medical care with escalating importance due to a rise in Non-Communicable Diseases and an ageing population. Advancement of services however, is hindered due to poor understanding about wound healing in different pathologies and lack of related learning

opportunities. To bridge this gap, this year the SLMA, College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka (CSSL) and the Education, Training and Research Unit of the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine joined hands to organize this workshop that aimed at sharing current knowledge and best practices in wound care to bring about a uniform improvement of wound care services in Sri Lanka. The event, which was incidentally the first Pre-Congress Workshop of the 131<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Medical

Congress of the SLMA, was held on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2018 at the Auditorium of the CSSL. The full day workshop included a range of lectures, panel discussions and demonstrations by a number of eminent speakers. Topics covered included the various types of wounds, wound assessment, optimal wound care and rehabilitation, among many others. A total of 300 medical officers and nursing officers participated in the workshop.



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# Health for all in Sri Lanka: Role of Parliamentarians in Achieving Universal Health Coverage.

Dr. Sumithra Tissera

Hony. Assistant Treasurer, SLMA

Health is a human right. No one should get sick or die just because they are poor, or because they cannot access the services they need"

Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director General of World Health Organization (WHO)

The second SLMA Pre-congress workshop was held on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 at the Parliamentary Complex, Sri Jayawardenapura, Kotte, with the participation of 55 Parliamentarians, more than 100 invitees from WHO Country Office and the council and members of the SLMA.

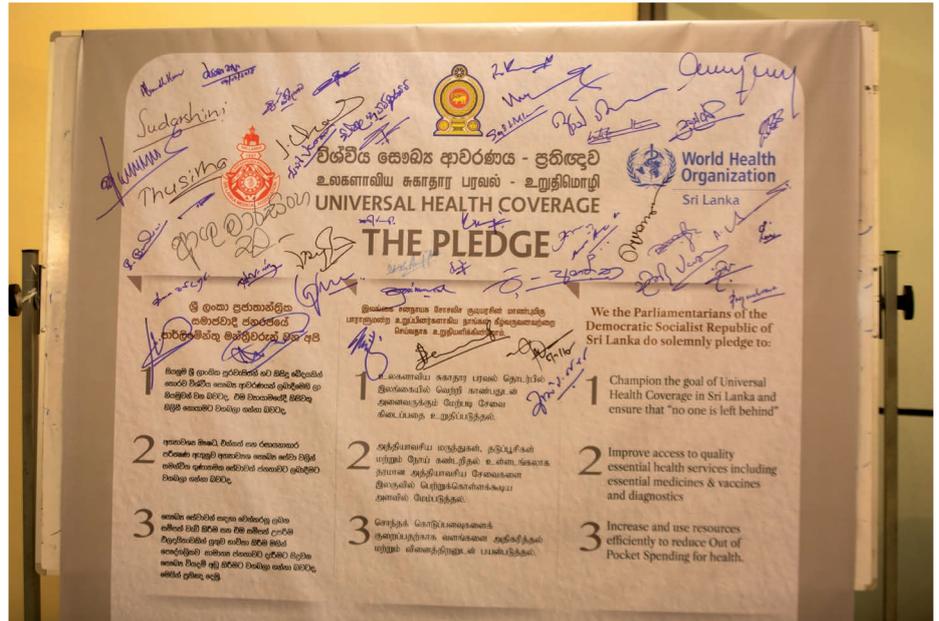
The session, which was held with the objective of emphasizing the importance of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), commenced with an overview of the session presented by Dr. Ruvaiz Haniffa, President SLMA.

The recent publication of the SLMA, A History of Medicine in Sri Lanka: 1948-2017, was then presented to the Speaker of the Parliament, Honourable Karu Jayasuriya MP and Mr. Neil Iddawala, Chief of Staff and Deputy Secretary General of the Parliament by Dr. Palitha Abeykoon, Co-Editor of the book and Dr. Hasini Banneheke, Honorary Secretary, SLMA respectively.

The Honourable Speaker addressed the gathering and spoke of the initiatives already in place within the Parliamentary premises to improve the health and well-being of the Parliamentarians and other staff. He also thanked SLMA and the WHO Country office for initiating a dialogue between the Parliamentarians on their role in achieving UHC in Sri Lanka.

The Technical session that followed the opening ceremony was moderated by Prof. Janaka de Silva, Director, Post Graduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo.

Dr. Palitha Abeykoon, Past President SLMA and President, National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol enlightened the audience on "UHC in Sri Lanka: what does it mean?"



Dr. Somsak Chunharas, Secretary General of the National Health Foundation and Former Minister of Public Health, Thailand spoke on "Global Perspectives on UHC and the Role of Parliamentarians and Policy Makers in achieving UHC".

The other presentations were delivered by Dr. Palitha Karunapema, Director NCD on "Current Health Profile of Sri Lanka and Disease Burden", Dr. Palitha Abeykoon on "Health Systems", Prof. Nilanthi de Silva, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya on "Human Resources for Healthcare", Dr. Ravi Rannan-Eliya, Executive Director, Institute of Health Policy on "Health Financing" and Prof. Saroj Jayasinghe, Professor of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo on "Universal Health Coverage". A very lively discussion followed the lectures.

The session closed with Dr. Razia Pendse, WHO Representative for Sri Lanka, summarizing the proceedings and presenting the way forward for the UHC initiative in Sri Lanka.

All Parliamentarians who

attended the session signed a pledge of commitment to UHC.

The session was sponsored by the WHO, Country office.

A fellowship dinner was held for the Parliamentarians and other invitees that evening at "Wijerama House", SLMA.



Contd. on page 14

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# Health for all...



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# Workshop on Communication skills: Training of Trainers

## Training Facilitators and Simulated Patients in a single workshop

Prof. Rasnayaka M. Mudiyanse

Course director

SLMA Trainer Training for Communication Skills Teaching

The SLMA, in line with its theme for 2018, "Shifting focus from diseases to patients: Today's vision, tomorrow's reality" has undertaken the mission of promoting the teaching of communication skills as one of its long-term projects. Teaching communication skills is a challenge as it encompasses all four domains of learning and demands a change in attitudes and behaviour, which is difficult to achieve. Therefore, in fostering communication skills, it has become mandatory to adopt learner-centred approaches and to provide opportunities to practice such skills in a safe environment with a facilitator and simulated patients. In such a situation, reflective learning can be induced, well intended feedback can be provided and opportunities for rehearsal and re-rehearsal made possible. To achieve this, training of facilitators and simulated patients is essential.

However, training of facilitators and simulated patients to promote teaching of communication skills to healthcare professionals has posed a challenge. Lack of experienced teachers to become master trainers and unfamiliarity of the teaching method have been the main barriers. Therefore, an innovative approach to achieve the target was developed in collaboration with the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo. The entire Training Programme was developed as a process of sharing experiences.

Preparation was a strenuous process. Developing case scenarios, feedback check-lists to observe performance of facilitators and simulated patients and developing reading material, was done as a collaborative activity. A guide for group leaders was developed and a one-day session with group leaders was conducted in preparation for the anticipated final complex process. The compilation of a detailed textbook of communication, comprising 25 chapters with contributions from several specialities was undertaken in parallel.

The teaching-learning process was initiated with a series of interactive lectures to address the cognitive part of learning. Here the Calgary Cambridge Model of communication along with the model of teaching that follows a similar process, were introduced. Experiential learning part took place in four small groups, each one consisting of ten facilitators and six simulated patients. Firstly, facilitators gained experience in conducting an interactive small group discussion with emphasis on learner engagement and exploring learner needs and expectations. Secondly, facilitators role-played, teaching a group of 4-5 'students' while being observed by group leaders and other facilitator trainees in the outer circle, thereby mimicking a fish bowl setup. At the end of each teaching session, observers provided feedback to the facilitator who had performed, based on a pre-prepared observation check-list. The workshop was a resounding success. Enthusiasm from participants was encouraging. There was an overwhelming

number of applicants for the programme, and as the intake was limited, it was decided to enrol the remainder for the next workshop to be held in September, 2018. Feedback was positive and heartening. However, the organisers have identified areas for improvement and plan to modify the programme, especially to accommodate the special needs of simulated patients.

SLMA will pursue in this mission of Training of Trainers and expand the programme to conduct communication skills training island-wide, while additionally incorporating other healthcare professionals, so that we can promote the development of patient-centred and empathetic healthcare professionals with effective communication skills.



Contd. on page 18

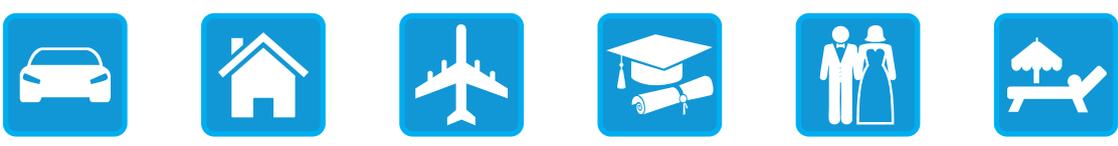




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## Workshop on communication...



Photo credits: Mr. Vihanga Silva

## Annual Representatives Meeting of the British Medical Association

**24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Brighton, UK**

Prof. Vajira H. W. Dissanayake, Past President, SLMA, and President of the Commonwealth Medical Association attended the Annual Representatives Meeting of the British Medical Association from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Brighton, UK. The picture shows Prof. Dissanayake together with representatives from Commonwealth Countries, from Left to right, President of the Indian Medical Association; Vice President (Europe) of the Commonwealth Medical Association from

Malta; Vice President (North America and the Caribbean) of the Commonwealth Medical Association from Jamaica; President, Malaysian Medical Association; President, Ghana Medical Association; President, Canadian Medical Association; and the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Medical Association from



Malta at the Installation of the President and BMA Awards Ceremony, on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018, at the Hilton Hotel in Brighton, UK.

## National Convention and Scientific Congress of the Malaysian Medical Association

**Royale Chulan Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**

Prof. Vajira H. W. Dissanayake, Past President, SLMA, and President of the Commonwealth Medical Association represented the SLMA at the National Convention and Scientific Congress of the Malaysian Medical Association from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at the Royale Chulan Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The picture shows Prof. Dissanayake and the Immediate

Past President of the Malaysian Medical Association and current Vice President for East Asia of the Commonwealth Medical Association, Dr. Ravi Naidu, in conversation with Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, the Deputy King of Malaysia at the Annual Dinner on 30<sup>th</sup>



June 2018 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Also in the picture is the Vice President of the Singapore Medical Association.

# To Sir with Love

Dr. Sudheera Uduwela

Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist

**P**rofessor Wilfred S. E. Perera, our beloved guru and mentor and a leading light in the field of Maternal and Gynaecological care in Sri Lanka for well over 4 decades, celebrated his ninetieth birthday on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2018. The humble and unpretentious great man did so amongst his close-knit family, friends and grateful students who will cherish the privilege of being tutored by an extraordinary man of knowledge, talent, kindness and humility.

Prof had his primary education at St Aloysius College, Galle. Both his parents were teachers and the ethics of hard work and discipline were etched early in him and his siblings. His dedication for learning was such that, as he later recalled, when home lights burnt out in the night, he would go under a nearby street lamp to continue his studies.

Having entered Colombo Medical Faculty his brilliance was apparent from the beginning. Many first classes and gold medals were to follow and he was off to United Kingdom with his eyes set on becoming a General Surgeon. Following the fellowship in Surgery and upon returning home in his early twenties, his career destiny would change on a chance encounter with Professor Sir Nicholas Attygalle, the much-feared Professor of Obstetrics and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. On hearing that his star student had decided upon a career in General Surgery he commanded and coaxed him to change his mind into a career in his specialty, Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Prof would fondly reminisce of Sir Nicholas as a 'man with a heart of gold' in spite of being widely known as a highly authoritative terror.

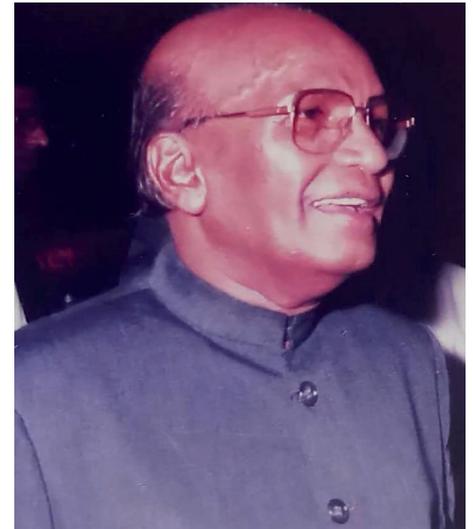
Membership and training in the specialty would follow and General Surgery's loss was the gain of maternity and gynaecological care in Sri Lanka for many decades to follow. To say that Prof's clinical acumen and surgical skills were exceptional is an understatement.

Anecdotal instances of us as students and then as Registrars, looking at each other in incredulity upon witnessing his diagnostic skills during examination of a patient, are numerous. There was no need for ultrasonic confirmation as he was hardly ever wrong. It's sad to recall the demise of such diagnostic skills that has now been replaced by imaging techniques. Modern generations of medical professionals will never know the exceptional diagnostic ability possessed by clinicians of Prof's calibre and genius.

His surgical skills were legendary and we in our long association with him as students, Registrars and later Consultants, cannot recall a single instance of him being overwhelmed by a surgical situation. Those were the days of radical malignancy surgeries and he set upon surgeries such as Wertheims hysterectomy, Schauta and Mithra procedures and radical vulvectomy with aplomb. His skill and speed in such surgery was exceptional and his Professorial Unit at North Colombo Medical College became a well-known referral center for such radical procedures. Prof would never decline if surgery was even remotely possible. Complete surgical cure was the rule before being transferred to the Cancer Institute for further management.

Despite being an exceptionally busy Professorial Unit, ours was a happy team where committed hard work was the norm. Morning ward rounds were a long lesson in clinical learning and a gentle nod or a smile from Prof was reward enough for a long evening and nights' hard work for us trainees. Prof never shouted or scolded but we would work hard to avoid disappointment in his face. His method was simple - hard work by example and we were keen not to disappoint the great man.

Prof's reputation as a surgeon and a clinician was international. Our little island was then blessed by two internationally acclaimed talents in the art of Gynaecological surgery, the other being Prof. Henry Nanayakkara. During our post-graduate training in the United Kingdom, many of us recall being inquired by the bigwigs of Gynaecology in UK, of



these Professors' wellbeing. These top gynaecologists took pride in knowing them personally and having seen them in action, and we took pride in being associated with them.

If ever there was anyone who shied away from obvious glory his reputation would bring, that was Prof. I recall an instance where a particularly difficult radical surgery was performed on a patient closely known to another famous professor. At the tea break following the surgery, he announced that he and another reputed clinician agreed that Prof must be the best Gynaecological surgeon in Asia. With a guffaw, Prof was out of the tea room in a flash and into operating theatres, embarrassed at such praise. That was Prof personified.

It is easy to keep reminiscing of the clinical and surgical skills of this great surgeon, but I am certain all who know him would agree that his hallmark and his greatest gift to us is his absolute humility. In spite of his iconic status, he probably never thought or felt he should live up to it. Anyone who meets him not knowing who he is, would never guess he is anything other than a simple friendly and kind man. May it be as the young gynaecologist of repute, internationally known professor of Gynaecology or in peaceful retirement, his demeanor has never changed. With his gracious broad smile, your hand clasped in both his hands and with childlike eagerness to inquire of your well-being, he would greet you, whoever you are.

Contd. on page 20

## To Sir with...

His obvious glee to know you are well and deep concern if all is not well, makes him a friend and a father figure to everyone who knows him. How nothing he has achieved in his lofty life has ever affected his simple ways, is appreciated by us as his greatest virtue. His genuine love for humanity and his sense of duty makes him attend every lecture, presentation, event or inauguration, encouraging the organisers and presenters of the event.

Rita, his beloved wife and life partner passed away a few years back, affecting all of us who knew her and Prof in particular. She was an amazing lady in step with him in everything that was good of him. She was friendly, unpretentious, kind and generous to a fault. Her pretty face was always lit up with a genuine smile and a large portion of her very active life was dedicated to the welfare of others. The

handsome and benevolent couple helped a large community of relatives, friends and less fortunate people to stand up in life, taking them under their wings and providing shelter, support and education over prolonged periods of time. Prof, following Aunty Rita's demise, continues her duties of generosity to date.

Prof's is a family of academia and music. The great Sunil Shantha was his cousin. Prof's love for music is well known and his renditions of beautiful and lesser known Sinhala songs of yesteryear is a much looked forward to feature at gatherings.

What appears an enchanted life was no bed of roses either. He too, like all mortals, had to face deep personal pains in his lifetime. Loss of his beloved daughter to an unexpected illness in her teenage years, loss of his loved brother at the high point of his career as a High Court Judge

following a road accident and subsequent demise of his beloved wife were some of them. Overcoming such travails through resolute courage speaks volumes of the man. In short, he is a man with a wonderful mission - to serve humanity to the best of his ability as long as he can.

His three children too need special mention. They have inherited their wonderful parents' gift of graciousness and humility. They with their families are a huge strength for Prof, and the excellence in academia and music continues.

On this very special occasion of his ninetieth birthday, we his ever-grateful students, friends, relations and all who enjoyed the experience of his genius and benevolence, rise to wish him many more years of good health and happiness and thank him for the privilege of being touched by a very special human being.

### Pre-Congress Workshop

## Establishing and sustaining meaningful Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) in research

Dr. Sumithra Tissera

Hony. Assistant Treasurer, SLMA

The fourth SLMA Pre Congress Workshop of the 131<sup>st</sup> Anniversary International Medical Congress, 2018 was held on 25<sup>th</sup> July at the Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM), University of Sri Jayawardenapura, Colombo 8. This was jointly organized by the Institute of Research & Development (IRD), Colombo and the SLMA. The workshop was co-chaired by Prof. Athula Sumathipala Professor of Psychiatry, Research Institute for Primary Care & Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, Keele University and Hon. Director, IRD and Dr. Sumithra Tissera, Hon. Assistant Treasurer of the SLMA.

The event commenced with the Welcome Address and the introduction to the workshop by Prof. Athula Sumathipala.

Dr. Steven Blackburn, Research Fellow – PPIE and Regional Lead for Public Involvement in Research, NIHR Research Design Service, then introduced the

evolution and the concept of PPIE. This was followed by a joint lecture by Dr. Blackburn and Ms. Adele Higginbottom, Coordinator, PPIE, Keele University, on "History of PPIE in the United Kingdom and Keele University", followed by a video presentation on experience of members of public who were attached to the PPIE programme at the Keele University.

Mr. Duminda Guruge, Senior Lecturer in Health Promotion, Rajarata University, shared his experience on "PPIE in the Sri Lankan setting" giving an example from the field. Dr. Kaushalya Jayaweera, Lead Biomedical Research Coordinator, IRD shared his experiences in PPIE in IRD's epidemiological research.

Next, Dr. Blackburn spoke on "What is the value and impact of PPIE in research and Ms. Higginbottom on "Best Practices in PPIE".



The sessions after tea included two short lectures and a lively small group discussion on "How to establish and sustain PPIE: What are the barriers and enablers" and "What are opportunities for PPIE in the South Asian Early-Development and Research Capacity-building (SEARCH) project". Prof. Diyanath Samarasinghe, Professor of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo, then enlightened the audience on "Thoughts for the future and potential applications".

The wrap up with "Actions for the future: The way forward" was done by Prof. Athula Sumathipala.

Contd. on page 21

## Establishing and sustaining...

There were more than 100 applicants for the workshop, and due to limited seating availability 72 participants were chosen using strict selection criteria. The workshop was free of charge to all participants. All

the participants were awarded a certificate of participation. Media coverage for the event was provided by the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Cooperation and Health TV. This workshop was graciously sponsored

by the Institute of Research & Development, Colombo through a research grant funded by the Medical Research Council, UK.



Photo credits: Mr. Amal Ranawaka

### Pre-Congress Workshop

5

## Pre-Congress Session in collaboration with the IIHS: Multidisciplinary training of Healthcare workers leading to collaborative delivery of holistic patient care

Dr Sankha Randenikumara  
Council Member - SLMA

The Sri Lanka Medical Association organized a successful Pre-Congress Session in collaboration with the International Institute of Health Sciences (IIHS) on "Multidisciplinary training of healthcare workers leading to collaborative delivery of holistic patient care". This session was held at the ClinMARC Auditorium of the National Hospital of Sri Lanka. The attendance was impressive with very good participation of allied health staff, mainly government nursing officers. The President of the SLMA Dr. Ruvaiz Haniffa, the Honorary Secretary Dr. Hasini Banneheke and Council Members were present at the session on behalf of the SLMA.

Dr. Ruvaiz Haniffa, addressing the gathering stressed the importance of public-private collaboration and appreciated the IIHS for being keen to work with the SLMA, the apex professional medical organization

of Sri Lanka. Moreover, he explained the SLMA's role in training and capacity building of healthcare workers which always has a multidisciplinary approach. The workshop commenced soon after. Dr. Nihal de Silva (IIHS) and Dr. Sankha Randenikumara (SLMA) chaired the session. Dr. Kithsiri Edirisinghe, CEO/Director Academic of the IIHS, also a renowned hospital administrator, opened the floor by providing an outline of 'The importance of multidisciplinary training'. Following this, Ms. Glenda Whiting, Principal Lecturer of Health, TAFESA, Adelaide, South Australia shared her experience on 'Training nurses in multidisciplinary settings'. Dr. Leanne Bodkin, Clinical Lecturer and Coordinator of Medical Humanities, University of Aberdeen, UK introduced the latest concept of 'interdisciplinary approach' to the audience in her session on "Evidence for inter-professional training". After the tea break, Mr. Peter Bodkin, Consultant Neurosurgeon and Honorary

Senior Clinical Lecturer in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, UK, spoke on "The models and the importance of multidisciplinary care" which was based on his work in the UK. Dr. Vikrant Bhardwaj, a well-known physiotherapist in India and a specialist in dry-needling, connected online via Skype to address the gathering as the last speaker of the day on "The role of a Physiotherapist in multidisciplinary care". The symposium ended with a real-time online survey on different controversies and case scenarios related to multidisciplinary training of healthcare workers, which allowed the participants to express their independent views. The survey was followed by a panel discussion with the involvement of all speakers.

It was an interactive forum in which the audience together with chairpersons and speakers actively discussed the experiences, barriers and the future of multidisciplinary training in the health sector.

Contd. on page 22

## Pre-Congress Session in collaboration...

The session adjourned with token presentations to the resource persons in recognition of their contribution. It is noteworthy that the entire Pre-

Congress Session was organized based on principles of sustainable development where no printed material was used; all the educational material and even the

certificates of attendance were available as e-documents.



Photo credits: Mr. Amal Ranawaka and IIHS

### Pre-Congress Workshop

## 6 Spectrum of liver diseases: Exploring new therapeutic modalities

Dr. Amaya Ellawala  
Hony. Assistant Secretary, SLMA

The sixth Pre-Congress Workshop of the 131<sup>st</sup> Anniversary International Medical Congress was held on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium, SLMA, on the topic 'Spectrum of liver diseases: Exploring new therapeutic modalities'.

The workshop was conducted by a panel of esteemed speakers representing the Chinese Medical Association who updated

the audience on current management practices and cutting-edge research related to non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, portal hypertension, liver carcinoma, drug induced liver injury and alcoholic liver disease. The session was chaired by Dr. Ruvaiz Haniffa, President, SLMA and Dr. Pierre Chan, Associate



Consultant, Department of Medicine, Ruttonjee & Tang Shiu Kin Hospitals, China.

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# Spectrum of...



Photo credits: Mr. Amal Ranawaka

## Pre-Congress Workshop

# 7 Masterclass in Stroke Rehabilitation: Learning from Stroke After Stroke

Dr. Pamod Amarakoon  
Council Member, SLMA

The SLMA Pre-Congress Session titled “Masterclass in stroke rehabilitation: learning from stroke after stroke” was held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at Hotel Galadari. This timely topic focused on sharing knowledge on latest treatment modalities in managing stroke and exploring the aspect of rehabilitation, which has received less attention in the Sri Lankan context. The

workshop was conducted with inputs from both local and international resource persons. The session was chaired by two eminent Neurologists in Sri Lanka Dr. J.B. Peiris and Prof. Saman Gunatilake. Prof. Tissa Wijeratne from the University of Melbourne initiated the session, enlightening the audience on therapeutic updates on acute re-perfusion following a stroke. This was followed by a lecture by Dr. Charith Perera in which he highlighted the recent developments in sub-acute

care of stroke. He moved the direction of the Pre-Congress Session more towards the rehabilitation aspect of stroke management during the latter part of his presentation. Dr. Bhasker Amatya from the University of Melbourne discussed the crucial aspect of prevention of stroke through proper public health interventions.

Contd. on page 25

## Masterclass in...

He briefed the audience on the practices used globally for preventing stroke and how these could be adapted to the perspective of a developing country. The session after the tea break was dedicated to Translational Research on Stroke Rehabilitation by Prof. Fary Khan. She presented the research work that has been undertaken in the Australian context

and compared the latest findings with accepted practices in stroke rehabilitation in the clinical world. She further demonstrated how simple rehabilitation interventions can bring about effective outcomes following stroke. This was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Dr. J.B. Peiris and Prof. Saman Gunatilake. The audience actively participated in

the discussion and most facts that were discussed were based on issues related to the management of stroke in the Sri Lankan context. The session received positive feedback from the participants.



Photo credits: Mr. Amal Ranawaka

## 8 Pre-Congress Workshop Pre-Congress Workshop on 'Research and Innovation'

**Dr. Dilshani W. N. Dissanayake,**  
Senior lecturer in Physiology  
Neuroscientist in-charge of the Neurosci-  
ence Research Laboratory  
Department of Physiology  
Director, Research Promotion and Facilita-  
tion Centre (RPF)C  
Faculty of Medicine  
University of Colombo

The Research Promotion and Facilitation Centre (RPF)C of the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo, as a Pre-Congress Workshop of the 131<sup>st</sup> Anniversary International Medical Congress of the SLMA, conducted a very successful workshop on research and innovation on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018, at the Galadari Hotel, Colombo. This was organised with the objectives of providing the participants with an overview of the

pathway that a researcher has to follow to turn a research idea into an innovation and to promote an interest in the audience to follow this pathway. Another objective of the workshop was to introduce the facilities provided by the RPF)C for the researchers in Sri Lanka.

The workshop commenced with an introduction to the objectives and plan of the sessions by Dr. Dilshani Dissanayake, Director of the RPF)C. She described the services and support facilities available in RPF)C for the researchers. Dr. Dissanayake introduced the Certificate Course on Post-graduate Research conducted by the RPF)C and invited interested participants to follow the course which would commence in October 2018.

The panel discussion on writing a research proposal and applying for grants was

facilitated by Prof. Nadira Karunaweera, Head of the Advisory Committee of the RPF)C and Prof. Vajira H.W. Dissanayake, Advisor and Chairperson of the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) of RPF)C. Prof. Karunaweera initiated the discussion with a very informative presentation on components of a research proposal and explained how a proposal could be developed to attract funding. Prof. Dissanayake introduced the funding bodies in Sri Lanka and overseas which provide grants and also emphasized the points to consider when applying for a grant. He generated an interest in the audience on the need to be innovative in research projects.

## Pre-Congress workshop...

The session on research methodology was facilitated by four activity coordinators of RPFC, Dr. Sisira Pathirana, Coordinator of core-research facilities for research, Dr. Asela Olupeliyawa, Coordinator of post-graduate research support, Dr. Shreenika Weliange, Coordinator of research training and Dr. Sameera Gunewardena, Coordinator for provision of forums to publicize research. The session commenced with an introduction to the session by Dr. Pathirana who coordinated the session, followed by a comprehensive and interesting presentation on research designs and methods by Dr. Olupeliyawa and Dr. Weliange. The highlight of the workshop was the group activity in which each group had to prepare a brief method section for the specific research problem given to them. There were eight groups

with two groups working on the same problem. The groups engaged in active discussion and the organizers kindly arranged for tea to be served in the room itself so as not to disrupt the momentum of the activity. All eight groups did an excellent job identifying methods for the research problems and reviewing the methods provided by the partner groups with constructive criticism. The session on writing and publishing research commenced with an introduction to the Research Writing Support Programme (RWSP) of the RPFC followed by a brief overview on how to write a research article by Dr. Dilshani Dissanayake. Dr. Sharmila Jayasena, the Coordinator of RWSP, educated the audience on finding the right journal in which to publish. Dr. Shreenika Weliange

who coordinates the online component of RWSP, discussed about plagiarism with an informative presentation. The last session of the workshop was organized by the TTO of RPFC. Dr. Kelum Wettasinghe, coordinator of the TTO informed the audience on the pathway from innovation to patenting and presented the services available through the TTO. Prof. Vajira H.W. Dissanayake, the Chair of TTO, concluded the session with inspiring examples of local and foreign researchers who have contributed to the world with new inventions. Dr. Dilshani Dissanayake made the concluding remarks thanking the organizers for inviting RPFC to conduct the workshop and the audience for their active participation.



Photo credits: Mr. Amal Ranawaka

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any member of the SLMA who considers himself/herself suitable to guide the SLMA in the year 2020 as President is kindly requested to contact a Past President of the SLMA, before 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

**Prof Wilfred Perera**  
 Past President Representative of the SLMA Council  
 (Tele: 2582828)



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