



VOLUME 10
ISSUE 2

CoMSAA Newsletter



JANUARY 2023



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President's Message

Dr Anula Wijesundere
President, CoMSAA



The year 2022 has drawn to an end and this heralds the end of my tenure as President of CoMSAA. It is also a time to reflect on what our targets were and what we have achieved.

I am delighted to inform you that CoMSAA has achieved two milestones in 2022. After leading a nomadic existence since our inception in 2011, the CoMSAA office was finally opened in the main administrative block on the 18th of November 2022.

The other milestone achieved this year was the CoMSAA membership reaching one thousand in October. However, this is no reason for complacency as our membership should actually be over 10,000 since our medical school was established 153 years ago and CoMSAA being in existence for the past eleven years.

The inter batch “Do you know” competition was conducted this year after a three-year break. This was a tremendous success, with the winners bagging over two hundred thousand rupees in prize money.

The COMSAA reunion too was held after a three-year interval with the participation of over 125 members. It was unique, as it was conducted for the first time in the 17 storied state of the art University of Colombo, Faculty of Medicine Tower.

CoMSAA is now an integral part of the Faculty of Medicine, having provided educational grants to needy students, educational equipment to the departments of medical education and community medicine, and financed entirely the cost of instruments for the Colombo Medical Orchestra and costumes for the choir and orchestra.

The CSR project of CoMSAA this year was assisting the Medical Students Buddhist Association in their “Wassana Diyawara” project in repairing the library of Sri Sumana Vidyalaya in Wathuyaya, Ratnapura and assisting at the medical clinic.

The Colombo Medical Congress 2022, jointly organized by the Faculty of Medicine and CoMSAA was successfully conducted between 21st to 27th of November. I am happy to state that CoMSAA was able to collect Rs 4.4 million for conducting this hybrid educational bonanza.

As I hand over the mantle of Office to my successor, I am happy that I have done my best for my old medical school. Being President of CoMSAA has given me the opportunity to pay back in a small measure the great debt of gratitude I owe the Colombo Medical School for the wonderful education I received, totally free of charge and made me the person I am today.

CoMSAA Activities

A Report from the Co-secretaries

The last six months saw several important events and activities coordinated by CoMSAA. These included the continued support of students through educational grants, the inter-batch general knowledge quiz and improving the educational facilities in the faculty. The CoMSAA was proud to partner with the faculty in organizing the Colombo Medical congress 2022. For the first time in two years the CoMSAA was also able to have a reunion.

Educational Grants

The economic struggles of the country have placed a huge strain on our students. However, the CoMSAA was able to rise to the occasion and support students with educational grants worth Rs 607,000/=. The scholarships were awarded to 24 students.

The donations for the grants were received from multiple benefactors including

- Ms. Chandrani Silva - Rs. 480,000
- Colombo 75 medics - Rs. 300,000 (5 scholarships at Rs. 5000/= per student)
- Dr. P.N. Fernando - Rs. 240,000
- Mrs Suneetha Amarasinghe - Rs. 48,000
- Prof. Prasad Katulanda - Rs. 30,000
- Mr. Janaka Silva - Rs. 24,000

Several other CoMSAA members have made independent donations directly to the Medical Students Financial Assistance Scheme facilitated by Prof. Athula Kaluarchchi. The President and the committee thank the generous donors and invite all alumni to support students in need.

Library Development Project

CoMSAA supported the “Learning Commons Project” of the new library in the UCFM Tower with donations worth approximately Rs. 4.4 million. The collection in 2021 was approximately Rs. 2,100,000, and in 2022 the collection was Rs. 2,260,000. Of this approximately Rs. 3,215,700 was utilized for the purchase of tables and chairs for the ‘Learning Commons’ area of the library. The remaining funds will be used for future educational purposes. Benefactors who donated in 2022 were:

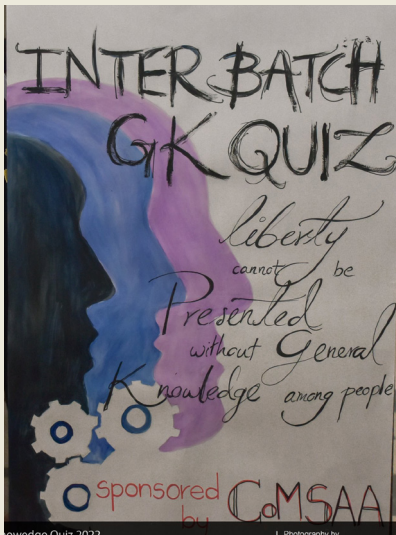
1. Dr. Sarath Seneviratne - Rs. 1,000,000
2. Advanced Level 2010 batch - Rs. 210,000
3. Mrs. Chandrani Silva - Rs. 150,000
4. Prof. Ravindra Fernando - Rs. 100,000
5. Dr. Chalukya Gunasekara - Rs. 100,000
6. Dr. Chinthana Hapuarachchi - Rs. 100,000
7. Dr. Pramilla Senanyaka - Rs. 100,000
8. Dr. Pushpa Punchihewa - Rs. 100,000
9. Dr. Harindu Wijesinghe - Rs. 100,000
10. Dr. Niroshan Seneviratne - Rs. 50,000
11. Dr. Sunil Hendalage - Rs. 50,000
12. Dr. Chula Herath - Rs. 30,000
13. Dr. Madhura Jayawardene - Rs. 30,000
14. Dr. Neomali Amarasena - Rs. 25,000
15. Dr. Harshini Fernando - Rs. 25,000
16. Mr. Janaka Silva - Rs. 10,000

CoMSAA is grateful to all the donors who helped in this effort through their kind donations.

CoMSAA made further donations to the Department of Medical Education for office furniture and tables for the value of Rs. 355,000. The Department of Community Medicine received a donation of Rs. 60,000 for the purchase of teaching equipment.

Interbatch General Knowledge Quiz 2022

The inter-batch general knowledge competition, organized by CoMSAA, was held on June 16th at the UCFM Tower. Many students, staff and alumni participated in this event. The quiz masters were Prof. Sameera Gunawardhana and Dr Madhuka de Lanerolle. CoMSAA appreciates greatly the hard work of Dr Leonard Wanninayake and Dr Rameshkumar Thevarajah in organizing this event successfully. CoMSAA awarded Rs 200,000 worth cash prizes to the winners of the quiz. It was a stimulating and educational experience for all the participants.



CoMSAA Reunion

The CoMSAA reunion was held on the 29th of October 2022. This began with an academic programme which was held at the mini auditorium of the new UCFM Tower. Alumni, Prof Ravindra Fernando, Prof Arosha Dissanayake and Prof Dinithi Fernando delivered excellent lectures. Prof Ravindra Fernando spoke on “Suicide, homicide or murder.” based on his legendary experience in forensic medicine. Prof Arosha Dissanayake’s presentation on “Schubert’s death: Lesson on facilitating a good death” was excellent and most thought provoking. Prof Dinithi Fernando’s presentation on “The musical missionary: A harmonious interlude in Sri Lankan history” was a delightful experience. At the end of the scientific programme, the president recited 5 verses of the 37 verse poem she composed titled ‘Glorious 150 years of the Colombo Medical School’.

The scientific sessions was followed by dinner at roof top of the new UCFM Tower, surrounded by the beautiful view of Colombo skyline at night. The fun and fellowship continued till late into the night. Around 130 alumni and well-wishers participated. The CoMSAA is very grateful to Dr Pramila Senananayake for the excellent organization of the event.

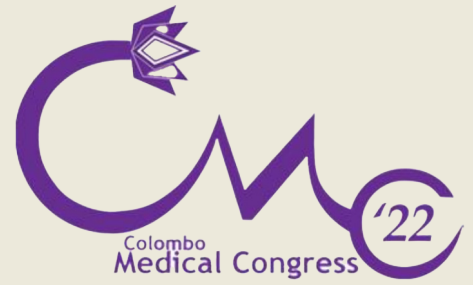


Opening of the CoMSAA Office

After 11 years of leading a nomadic existence, CoMSAA was able to open its own dedicated office in the administrative block on 17th of November 2022. The Dean Prof. Vajira Dissanayake, Founder president, Prof. A. H. Sheriffdeen, past presidents Prof. Athula Kaluarchchi and Dr. Sarath Gamini De Silva, the present president Dr. Anula Wijesundere and many others participated in this event. The CoMSAA is grateful to the faculty for providing a prominent location for the CoMSAA office. The dean and the past presidents and the current president addressed the gathering. The president then hosted the executive committee to kiri bath lunch.



Colombo Medical Congress 2022



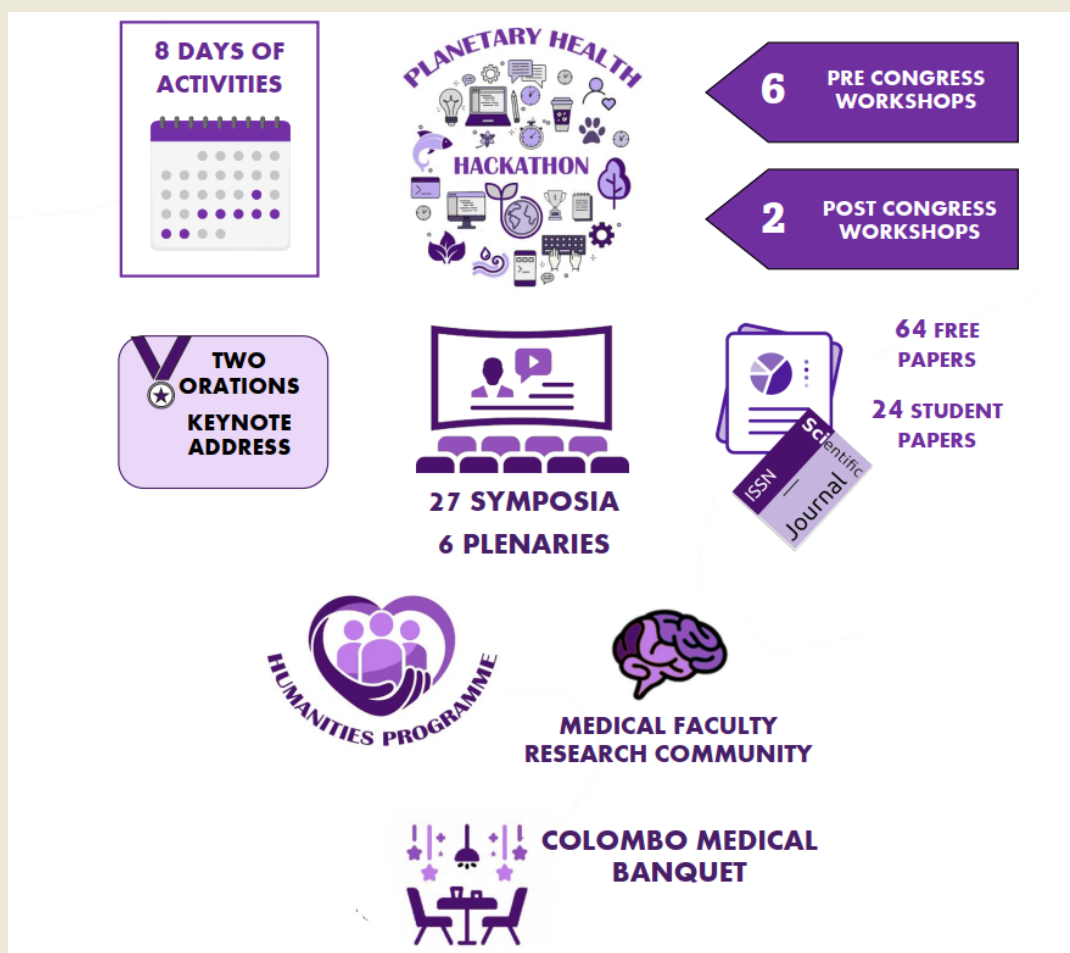
CoMSAA, together with the Research Promotion and Facilitation Center of the Colombo Medical Faculty organized the congress. It was held as a hybrid event with the participation of both local and foreign speakers and participants. The inauguration ceremony was held on the 23rd of November, and the sessions were held from 24th to 26th.

Onsite activities were at the newly opened UCFM Tower. The congress comprised pre-and post-congress workshops, plenaries, symposia, oral abstracts and posters presentations. Dr Sarath Gamini De Silva delivered a plenary on behalf of CoMSAA, titled “The doctor in society - A Sri Lankan perspective”. Our distinguished alumni contributed as symposia coordinators and resource persons of symposia. They also contributed by presenting their research as oral or poster presentations. A special feature was the medical humanities activities.

The CoMSAA Oration was delivered by Vidya Jyothi Prof. Janaka De Silva, Former Senior Professor and Chair of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya, who spoke on the “Supporting affordable healthcare through innovative research”.

The Congress ended with the Colombo Medical banquet which was held on the 26th November, on the rooftop of the UCFM Tower.

CoMSAA contributed to the CMC2022 in organizing the event as well as raising funds in excess of Rs. 4.4 million for the event.



Pre-Congress Workshops



Inauguration and Faculty Oration



Plenaries and Symposia



Free Paper Sessions and Student Sessions



Medical Humanities



Colombo Medical Banquet



Donations toward Colombo Medical Choir and Colombo Medical Orchestra

The formation of the Colombo Medical Choir and the Colombo Medical Orchestra, both the first of their kind in any university in Sri Lanka, was an exciting innovation this year. Both were launched at the Colombo Medical Congress 2022. The CoMSAA provided Rs. 2,000,000 for the purchase of musical instruments and sound systems. Cost of costumes were Rs. 550,000. The beautiful performances at the congress were proof of the talents of our students and the value of this donation. We hope the students will continue to partake in these with enthusiasm.



CoMSAA Oration

Supporting affordable healthcare through innovative research

Research in Sri Lanka is hampered by low funding. In such a resource limited setting, local researchers must learn to adapt and innovate. The research that we do should be low cost; yet result in maximum social and economic benefits. The challenge is to ensure relevance and feasibility. Mapping research with Sustainable Development Goals will undoubtedly improve its global relevance. The strategy I employed was to focus on health problems prevalent locally, relevant globally, but rare in the West. This attracted foreign collaborations, whenever it became necessary. In the lecture I provide personal examples of research employing this strategy. It includes opportunistic research on organophosphorus poisoning and the safety of ante-natal deworming; prospective clinical trials investigating cost-effective interventions for treatment of Yellow Oleander (*Thevetia peruviana*) poisoning and improving the safety of antivenom treatment for snakebite envenoming; and the use of secondary data to estimate the global disease burden of snakebite and to develop cost-effective sampling methods for epidemiological surveys. These examples demonstrate how rising to the challenge of conducting research with limited resources can produce results of global significance and strengthen affordable health care.

Vidya Jyothi Professor Janaka de Silva
Senior Professor and Chair of Medicine
Faculty of Medicine,
University of Kelaniya



Doctor in the Society

A Sri Lankan Perspective

I thank the organizers for inviting me to talk on a very relevant topic at a time when the role of the educated in society is becoming the focus of the people as well as the members of our own profession. I am known to be somewhat blunt calling a spade a spade in expressing my opinion as I strongly believe that diplomacy often fails to achieve desired results. As such I can only hope that, at the end of my presentation, the organisers of the Colombo Medical Congress 22 will not regret ever asking me to speak.

Wherever I appear to find fault with the activities of the medical profession, it is purely to ensure that we do our best to reorient ourselves to maintain the respect the society still has for the noble profession.

I strongly believe it is unlikely you will hear genuine sentiments I express here in any other forum. As such please give your ears to what I say carefully, as you will not be distracted by visual impulses from the video screen.

At the very outset I need not stress the fact that we in Sri Lanka are going through perhaps the most difficult period in our lifetime, a crisis of unimaginable proportions. More relevant to the topic, the role of every member of the society, specially the professionals, is being questioned and re-examined, either to apportion blame or to find ways out of the dire situation.

We belong to a very old, much respected profession, one of the three professions recognized from medieval and early modern times, the other two being divinity and law. It should be noted that these three professions remain the ones closest to the people. The activities, or rather inactivity, of these professionals have a direct impact on society.

A doctor has been treated as a demigod. It has been said if one can't be the king, he should try to become a doctor. "Rajek wenna barinan, vedek wenna". Such was the respect with which the doctor has been held in society throughout history.

However, while the doctor may be venerated by the individual relieved of an ailment and by the family, it is unfortunate that the society at large often sees the doctor as yet another member serving and benefitting

from a corrupt system. The doctors' shortcomings and mistakes are highlighted while their achievements in maintaining services without adequate resources are downplayed mostly.

There is hardly a secret in day to day life a patient will not divulge to the doctor, if we are prepared to spend time listening. That is important as many of the complaints a patient presents with have a social background contributing in a big way. For that interaction to be fruitful, the doctor has to maintain the best demeanor in all aspects to instill confidence in the patient. Unfortunately the general impression among the public is that the doctors do not seem to have enough time to listen to patients during a hasty consultation.

I have come across many in the older generation who keep praising with nostalgia the exemplary qualities of doctors of yesteryear. I point out to them that those doctors belonged to a different generation and a different mold, where citizens were nurtured from early days in a value centered society, and as such worked in a more respectable way as public servants. Thus it is not reasonable to expect present day doctors nurtured and working in a corrupt environment to behave very differently from the rest of the society. However, due to the very nature of our work in close contact with the people to relieve their suffering, they quite rightly expect us to strive to be above board all the time.

Society is ever ready to treat doctors with respect. That is why wherever we go, we are treated with a difference. We are always encouraged by others to break queues; we are often let off lightly by the police after committing traffic offenses and the like. The doctor's badge on our cars makes a big difference where it matters. No wonder, this badge is abused by those not entitled to use that, as well as by doctors themselves. It is ridiculous to see doctors appearing in public places in their blue scrubs meant to be worn only in clinical settings. Demanding respect is not the way to go about.

Fallout of the Pandemic

The COVID pandemic has made the medical profession admirably manage the unprecedented crisis many have not faced before in our lifetime. This has changed the very outlook of medical practice world over. How the

medical services in the resource poor country of ours rose to the occasion and managed as well as or even better than the richer countries is being admired even by the WHO. Free on call services provided by volunteer doctors in the SLMA-Mobitel 247 Doc on Call service was a new experience, much appreciated by the people.

We have now learned to live with COVID. However it is unfortunate that continued hiding behind masks has further distanced the caregiver doctor from the patient. Reported reluctance of many doctors to get close to the patient for fear of catching infection, despite being vaccinated and using other protective measures, and writing prescriptions without ever touching the patient, is beyond comprehension and cannot be justified. The pandemic has exposed many undesirable facets in the administration of healthcare services in the country. As was happening over the years the doctors in various specialties served in committees to advise the administrators in planning the response. And, as often happens, it was disheartening to see how such advice was ignored by the decision makers leading to chaos in many instances. This crisis has exposed corruption and fraud plaguing the health service, as much as the rest of the affairs of the country, over many years. It is unimaginable and shameful how unscrupulous politicians, administrators, private healthcare providers, businessmen and even some doctors themselves, allegedly exploited human misery to line their own pockets. As a consequence we are now faced with almost insurmountable problems in maintaining even basic healthcare services in a bankrupt country. I need not elaborate on the shortage of drugs and other resources nearly paralyzing the services. A country hitherto boasting of an exemplary free health service admired world over, is now on the verge of seeing avoidable deaths and disease due to many deficiencies in the healthcare services.

Role of the Medical Profession in Preventing Irregularities

Could the medical profession have done more in the past to avoid the current difficulties in the making for many years? We knew all along that there was alleged corruption in procuring drugs and equipment. There was gross political interference in the functions of the drug regulatory authority. It was well known that there was mismanagement in the distribution of manpower. The hospitals in bigger cities were overstaffed while the health services in the periphery suffered from shortage of doctors, other personnel and material. The doctors demanded and received increased salaries with overtime payments, which we know were often

on fraudulent claims. But trade unions of doctors indulged purely in looking after the interests of their members, just like any other union in non professional occupations, turning a blind eye to many of their own shortcomings and fraudulent activities, at the expense of deterioration of services. This is despite the fact that a professional, by definition, unlike others just doing a paid job, is expected to work towards the improvement of the standards of the profession as well. At present there is callous disregard for the fundamental rights of people to express their opinion peacefully. Such suppression of dissent has health implications as well. Alleged overuse of outdated tear gas, physical assault of unarmed protesters, manhandling of men and women, uncivilised treatment of prisoners are all instances where there should be an outcry from the medical profession, at least as far as the health implications are concerned. Apart from a recently formed grouping of a few medical professionals for system change, there is hardly a whisper, apart from issuing lengthy statements with no follow up action, from older well established organizations of doctors. Recently, when a doctor was interdicted for speaking aloud on impending childhood malnutrition, not even the Colleges of Paediatricians or Community Medicine have come to his defense.

Role of the Professional Colleges

To what extent have the various medical associations and professional colleges acted to keep these irregularities in check? The specialist Colleges could have insisted on their members not to endorse extra duty claims of juniors without checking. So far they are guided by the decades old constitutions that confine them to purely academic activity. I was surprised and dismayed just a few weeks ago when the oldest college of medical specialists in the country unanimously decided to remain strictly within the objectives of their constitution drafted over 50 years ago, when the issues affecting the community and the doctors were very different, confining themselves purely to academic activity. They decided it was too risky for their reputation to get involved in the current political turmoil in the country, and to avoid it like plague. The medical associations and Colleges should note that if they just watched passively in silence as the social fabric collapsed around them, they may not be left with any room to manoeuvre or enough members to work with, as the younger doctors leave the country in droves looking for greener pastures to live and work in peace. It is pertinent to note here that almost all post graduate trainees who passed the MD Medicine examination recently prefer to specialize in general internal medicine rather than in hitherto popular fields

like cardiology or endocrinology, as it is much easier to find jobs abroad that way. I understand that services in anaesthesia and psychiatry will have the greatest negative impact due to the brain drain. The Colleges by confining themselves to academic activity, may be just training doctors at tax payers' expense for service abroad! However, let me note with appreciation and congratulate the multitude of Colleges and Associations for their resilience in continuing the academic programmes at a very challenging time. They have garnered support from a wide variety of well wishers and obtained donations of drugs and other material for hospitals that are in short supply during the crisis.

It is high time that the colleges amended their constitutions, to include as an objective, an advocacy role in non academic matters dealing with social welfare and governance which could have a serious impact on healthcare services in the long term. They could appoint subcommittees to constantly monitor such aspects in the community and formulate appropriate action. The SLMA has done just that now. The intercollegiate committee initiated by the SLMA for the purpose of COVID control could be a basis for coordinating this non academic activity.

If we were proactive in the past, we could have prevented to some extent the calamity befalling the society at present. We knew that the most powerful trade union of doctors, much respected in the years gone by, was getting too involved in mundane politics. They indulged in giving expert advice on non medical affairs as well, bringing disaster, among other areas, to the agriculture sector in the country and hunger and poverty to the farming community and the public at large. As a result, the medical profession is now being looked upon by the people as one of the main architects of the current dismal situation.

The senior doctors in various associations and colleges, knowing the obvious repercussions, did not seek a discussion or some other form of intervention with the medical trade union leaders to advise them to review their course of action. We had no say, or rather were reluctant to have anything to do with, in the affairs of these powerful trade unions of mainly non specialist medical officers whose services and cooperation were essential for specialists to function.

Similarly we should have known all along that irregularities in areas like drug procurement will create many future shortages affecting our services. We could

have taken a strong stand to prevent or minimize them by at least exposing the same to the public. Non-medical unions in the health service shouted hoarse about the irregularities but were conveniently ignored by those in authority. Doctors, with perhaps greater influence on decision makers, could have had a greater impact if they resorted to similar forceful action. But we considered ourselves to be too respectable to get involved in such so-called dirty affairs.

It is considered more beneficial to keep company with powerful politicians many of us associate with and avoid discussing political matters with them. It is an open secret that many senior doctors were close associates of errant politicians in power. Our word would have carried more weight if we cared to address the various issues leading the country to the present dismal state. We could have easily arranged discussions with political and administrative authorities to convey our displeasure at the way things were being done. We waited until it was quite late and much damage was done to educate the public about the fallacy of the Dhammika Peniya in curing COVID. It was the same in controversial issues like the forced cremation of Muslim bodies dying of COVID and alleged large scale sterilization procedures by a doctor. No specialist or the College in the relevant field came out openly without delay to educate the public on the issues. We watched passively as so much of false rhetoric by politicians, the clergy and even medical men, kept the issue inflamed.

I wrote several newspaper articles on these issues. I was warned by my colleagues not to court trouble and to write under a pseudonym, which advice I ignored without any hesitation. I was somewhat ridiculed by union members when I wrote an open letter at an early stage to the medical trade union leader already referred to, asking him to review his problematic behaviour and change course. Such activity by influential organizations of doctors would have achieved positive results where I as a mere individual acting alone may have failed. We are silent observers when so much harmful unproven medications are promoted over electronic media about non communicable diseases like diabetes. I admit that while having immense faith in the rational scientific basis of allopathic medicine, we have to be quite smart and diplomatic in practising our art and keeping afloat in a sea of native medicine.

It appears that our profession that can greatly influence the affairs in the country, is paralysed by an overwhelming desire to avoid unnecessary trouble and by the fear of victimization by politicians thus allowing the latter to do

as they like and ruin the country. Preventive interference cannot be misinterpreted or summarily discarded as unnecessary involvement in politics. After all politics involves governance of the people and that certainly overlaps our field of work in a big way.

While complaining about the poor educational standards of our parliamentarians, a situation beyond our control, how can the professionals keep quiet allowing them a free hand in matters of cardinal importance?

Private Sector

There is no doubt private practice by doctors has become a necessary evil. It has reduced a tremendous burden on the free health service. But we have to bear in mind that many patients prefer private services not because they can afford it, but because of the delays, lack of basic comforts in the wards and attitudinal problems seen among government health workers. This in turn is due mostly to overcrowding and shortages of materials, and cannot be blamed entirely on the personnel involved.

However it is sad to note that very similar undesirable conditions have now pervaded the private sector as well. The lack of a properly regulated general practice with a system of referral to specialists has made a mess in the private sector. As a result everyone with a headache goes to a neurosurgeon and every young man with a chest pain of obviously musculoskeletal origin goes to a cardiologist. But then, it is the responsibility of the consulted specialist to see that unnecessary investigations like CT scans or other expensive tests are avoided and that they are referred to the appropriate consultant or a GP for follow up. I know of a patient with bronchial asthma in an outstation town who traveled a long distance to be followed up for nearly two years by a cardiac surgeon as the ignorant patient went to him for “papuwe amaruwa”. This has to be sheer irresponsibility, and not greed for money, as the specialists concerned are already overloaded with work in their own field, and are financially well rewarded.

Many doctors including specialists do not follow the basic guidelines in writing a simple prescription. I am not going to deal at length with the well known allegation against doctors in government service working in the private sector during hospital working hours, not spending enough time for a consultation or the exorbitant charges for their services. Society looks upon the doctors in poor light as a result.

I doubt whether any Association or College of doctors ever engaged their members in a discussion on these aspects.

As far as I am aware, none of their academic conferences have symposia on the public perception of the way we practice our profession. It is up to the doctors themselves to address these issues and rectify the shortcomings without waiting for the authorities to regulate through legislation.

The doctors have a social responsibility to see that the private sector does not exploit the hapless patients. As I keep saying repeatedly, this is the only business or service where the “salesman”, namely the doctor, decides what the “customer”, that is the patient, should buy. Hence there is a tremendous moral obligation on the doctor to see that the patients’ misery is not exploited for personal gain. This has to be kept in mind every time we order an investigation or prescribe a drug. Practicing medicine in the midst of an unprecedented economic crisis in a bankrupt country is an art the doctors have to master pretty fast. It is high time that the SLMA and other Colleges and Associations turned their attention on this aspect as a matter of urgency. At present many justifiably believe that the doctors work hand in glove with the private sector service providers and the pharmaceutical industry for personal gain at the expense of the patient. It should prick our conscience if these third parties are exploiting our patients who primarily come to us for relief. We as a group can have much influence in getting the private healthcare service providers to be more reasonable and people friendly in pricing their services. We seem to be worried that we might be penalized by them not providing us with enough work.

Funding by the Pharmaceutical Industry

How our various academic activities, like the annual Conferences, are lavishly funded entirely by the pharmaceutical industry is well known. Presidents and councils of various Colleges more or less demand drug companies for sponsorship. Year end account balance sheets allow the office bearers to boast of profits made almost entirely by extracting funds from the pharmaceutical companies.

We pretend not to know that every rupee the drug companies spend on all these activities is added to the price patients pay for their drugs. It is sheer hypocrisy when we appear to speak for the patients rights by complaining about the exorbitant prices of medicine.

Being so extravagant in our activities is inconsistent with the difficult times we are in. I have been arguing for a drastic reduction of the costs thus incurred. Using cheaper venues rather than five star hotels, making do with boxed

meals where necessary at one third the cost of buffets are some of the practical solutions we can employ. For quite sometime now, many developed countries as well as neighbouring India have imposed drastic restrictions on the unholy alliance between doctors and the pharmaceutical industry. Let's make 2023 the year we start to minimize our dependence on funds from pharmaceutical companies for our academic activities and set an example to the community on how to thrive in the midst of an economic and humanitarian crisis. This I understand will be a difficult task to deviate from the culture we are used to over the years. As a council member I am personally hoping to continue my agitation to achieve this in the SLMA next year. I sincerely hope other colleges and associations too will work along these lines without any further delay.

Sri Lanka Medical Council

Our regulatory mechanisms too have been less than effective in maintaining standards that the society expects from the medical profession. The General Medical Council in the UK acts like an independent court of law in its regulatory function. In contrast, the Sri Lanka Medical Council, still working on an archaic medical ordinance, is restricted in its ability to do a proper regulatory function to maintain discipline among doctors. Many amendments to rectify its shortcomings, broadbase its composition and expand its scope proposed over the years by the Council itself, but needing approval by the parliament, have been ignored by the politicians concerned. It is sad to note that some leading members of the medical profession too have connived with the politicians to undermine the authority of the SLMC. As a result the SLMC is concerned mainly with the registration of doctors while moving at a snail's pace in maintaining their discipline thereafter. Our standing in society would be enhanced if we appear to stand with the people assisting them in their struggle for survival. We have more to do than just treating the victims after the damage is done. As much as we give prominence to preventive medicine, we have an important role to play in working against social injustice perpetrated by the rulers. People quite rightly believe that with the respect we command from all sectors, our positive actions on their behalf are likely to be more productive than the general public demonstrating vociferously on the streets.

As an example, we can see how the police are more careful in dealing with demonstrations and protests by lawyers and other professionals. Of late the legal profession has come out in a big way in defence of the people, though up to now they too have been silent bystanders while the laws were being applied unequally and grossly abused depending on the power and influence of individuals concerned.

Looking to the Future

Until we rethink our strategies and change course, people look upon doctors and other professionals as a privileged bunch looking after their own interests only and thriving at their expense.

There is little use in continuously boasting and congratulating ourselves for praiseworthy achievements so far in curative and preventive aspects of medicine despite limited resources. Those achievements are brought to nothing by the traitorous activities of unscrupulous politicians and their henchmen, which we have ignored so far. Rather than extolling the virtues and many good qualities still preserved in the medical profession, that is why I devoted this presentation mostly to highlight the shortcomings and the reluctance of our organisations in preventing or rectifying them. Thus we have failed our countrymen in many areas where we could have been proactive to prevent social maladies the Sri Lankans are suffering from now.

The medical profession should look inwards and effect a radical system change before we could influence the outside world. It is high time, though rather belatedly, to rethink our future role outside the sphere of academic activity, as an influential group of professionals, whom the society can look upon as their saviours rather than as a part of the problem.

Dr. Sarath Gamini De Silva
Plenary lecture delivered at the
Colombo Medical Congress
24th Nov 2022



Membership Drive

The membership drive flourished this year due to untiring efforts of the President, Dr. Anula Wijesundere. 170 new members joined the CoMSAA in 2021/2022, increasing the total membership to 1145. We hope the drive will continue and that the membership will grow in leaps and bounds in the years to come.

Contribution to Wassana Diyawara 2022

CoMSAA contributed Rs. 100,000 through donations to the Wassana Diyawara programme conducted by the Medical Students' Buddhist Association for refurbishing and reconstruction of the dilapidated library of Sri Sumana Vidyalaya in Wathuyaya, Ratnapura. The President participated in the free medical clinic held on the 20th of November.



In conclusion, as we draw to the end of a successful year, we would like to thank the members of the executive committee and the membership for their support this year. Despite the many challenges we faced this year, CoMSAA has been able to continue to grow and support its alma mater, only due to the fierce determination and motivation of the membership and the committee. We wish the new committee the very best as they begin their term.

From the Editors

In search of greener pastures



The brain drain that has resulted from the economic crisis needs exigent attention. The effect it might have on the healthcare and education sectors is a point to ponder. Can it be converted to wisdom gained? is a likely question we need to implore. It is no secret that the intellectuals of any country are one of its most expensive resources. When they decide not to work in the country that paid for their education and training, we need to find ways to harness their knowledge and skills in the future to enhance our economy. However, this needs mechanisms in place and foresighted leadership. What entices most to leave their motherland stems from the pursuit of better quality and standards of living by way of higher salaries and better working conditions. Often the investments made for their education and training translate into a loss of valuable resources which is a gain for many affluent nations who didn't fork out the cost incurred. The question is how we as a nation can strike a balance between lost opportunity and resources gained in terms of foreign exchange to enhance research capacity and collaborations.

Most Sri Lankan healthcare professionals find their new homes in countries such as the UK, Australia, the USA, and Canada. Higher salaries for the number of hours they put in is one of the major reasons along with working in well-equipped hospitals with more facilities are the reasons underpinning their preference to migrate. The root cause of migration has been identified as decades of underinvestment leading to scares resources, especially in the health and education sectors in developing countries. This has led to demotivated staff that lack leadership. To overcome these obstacles, we as a nation should build conducive working conditions. Many who migrate still consider Sri Lanka to be their home despite their citizenship status. One long-term solution could be to invest in developing STEM fields in Sri Lanka thus improving its working conditions. It is high time that policymakers take actionable decisions to stall outmigration by providing better opportunities locally. Stepping away from archaic concepts we should now harness the power of technology in connecting people wherever they are in the world. This can aid us in getting global expertise despite being miles away physically.

Therefore, brain drain should not be viewed as lost resources in this digitalized era. In contrast, we can look at it as opportunities gained. As many who flee their motherland would want to contribute to its people given that there is a conducive environment to do so.

Dr Dineshani Hettiarachchi
Dr Rameshkumar Thevarajah

Members' Corner

Mates Of UCFM Colombo '82

150 lads and lasses huddling in the corners four
Anatomy Crammed from gud ole Last till eyes got sore
Fearing Sigs and failing spots from Path enter the dragon Muir
Besotted with Chamberlain till the final lap doth endure

Four decades rolled & forgotten all but our names
The faces blink but in our new cognitive decline
The face has no name the name has no face
But the nostalgia's strong camaraderie lingers

And we finger the WhatsApp to see a familiar face
And our memories sail a thousand seas
And remember with sadness the trips insane
Sathare's departed generous face meeting all needs with grace

Many bid farewell to healing art of four decades
Now sewing painting rowing song or dance
As the memories flood in with the boys' pranks
Down memory lane as all 150 gleefully prance

Prof Jean Perera
MBBS in 1982

Violence in Sri Lankan Universities

The subject of ragging or violence in universities is close to my heart and is a subject that causes much concern to most civic minded persons. This problem has also caused untold misery to all families personally affected by this malady.

Ragging has been off the public radar for about two years due to the closure of universities in the wake of the prolonged Covid-19 island wide lockdowns. Sadly, no sooner the academic activities commenced with on-site learning, a serious incident of ragging was reported from the University of Peradeniya, in September 2022.

The students of the Arts Faculty had brazenly ragged a group of students from the Law Faculty who spoke and acted openly and independently against ragging in the university canteen. This violence leads to the closure of the Arts Faculty to the new entrants and the raggers. This has remained so for the past 3 months as the students had apparently not given an assurance that they would not resort to ragging when the university reopens again.

The student leaders who openly gave leadership to the “Aragalaya”, boasting of their success in driving home President Rajapakse, claimed it was child’s play to send the Dean of the Faculty of Arts home. They even had the audacity to pose death threats to him! Their threat however has turned out to be a damp squib.

What is ragging?

Ragging is a criminal act according to the law. Ragging is a deliberate act, a form of torture which causes physical, psychological or sexual stress or trauma. This invariably leads to humiliation, harassment and intimidation. Ragging also leads to psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety and stress situations.

From - Prohibition of Ragging and other forms of violence in Educational Institutes Act No 20 of 1998.

As ragging in universities continued unabated, for many decades, Prof Mohan de Silva (2015 – 2019), during his tenure as Chairman, University Grants Commission, appointed Prof. Uma Coomaraswamy as the Chairperson of the Centre for Gender Equity / Equality for Prevention of Sexual and Gender based Violence and Ragging, of the University Grants Commission.

The findings of the committee are indicated below.

1. Sex & gender based violence is mainly perpetrated against female students, especially against under privileged students from remote areas.
2. Includes physical, sexual, verbal and psychological harassment.
3. Results - physical violence 12 %, verbal violence 13% and sexual violence 13%.

Consequences of ragging in universities:

1. Over 9834 students selected for universities have abandoned their studies in the past 15 years
2. At least 18 students have committed suicide.
3. Nearly 9900 female under graduates have been subjected to sexual harassment by their seniors
4. Many students have become partly or totally paralyzed, attempting to escape from aggressors.
5. Hundreds suffer from depression, anxiety & stress syndromes
6. Many parents have pulled-out their children from state university and admitted them private universities in Sri Lanka or overseas
7. Current victims of violence invariably become the aggressors the following year.





Consequences of ragging

It is well known that ragging causes hatred, crushes self esteem, instigates negative attitude and leads to mental and physical trauma. Unfortunately, the victims of ragging during the current year often become the aggressors the next year. Thus, ragging or violence in Sri Lankan universities is a vicious cycle, which needs to be stopped as early as possible to promote healthy learning and prevent the drastic consequences.

In this context, one can wonder why ragging has not yet been eliminated from the Sri Lankan university system. This unfortunate state has happened due to the following reasons

1. Lack of concern or awareness among the public
2. Apathy among the professionals, even university lecturers
3. Inactivity by Vice Chancellors, especially politically appointed VC's, fearing strikes and closure of universities
4. Deans, lecturers and administrators of universities
 - neglect or ignore ragging despite knowledge
 - accept ragging as a normal occurrence

So far, the only silver lining in the tragedy of ragging has been the action taken by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, Professor Sujeewa Amarasekera. Seventeen students, who engaged in ragging, were charged, remanded and subsequently expelled from the university. It was subsequently found that the Peratugami organization, a breakaway extreme leftwing group of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna was mainly responsible for the strikes in the universities. However, it is gratifying to note, that despite the stern action taken against the aggressors, the University of Ruhuna functioned normally. This debunks the myth that action against raggers would lead to strikes by university students.

The Peratugami Organization

Ragging is also a form of a sinister political strategy. Some politician uses the social and psychological weakness of both the perpetrators of ragging and their victims to gain control over hapless new entrants. Rag leaders are often required to be members of extreme radical political parties that sponsor the movement. Student unions are also controlled by this movement and often the student unions support those who carry out ragging when the latter face punishment. Recent incident at University of Peradeniya bear testimony to this fact.

The Peratugami Organization is a highly organized breakaway group of the Janatha Vimukthi Party, that controls students, often holding them to ransom. They select mostly students from financially deprived families in remote areas. Ragging is well planned and organized and leaders and deputy leaders are appointed well in advance of arrival of freshers. The freshers are programmed to obey orders of seniors and prevented from attending classes in English & IT. This will certainly deprive them of good employment opportunities in later life.

President Ranil Wickremasinghe who had the courage and determination to end the 05 month "Aragalaya" within 48 hours of become the president must now act with the determination and

commitment to end violence in Sri Lankan Universities forthwith. The proposal by President Wickramasinghe to make it mandatory for all university students to leave the campus after only one extra year is excellent. This proposal, if implemented, would make students focus more on academic activities rather than direct their energy to radical political activities. The President must convince the Ministers of Education, Higher Education and the University Grants Commission and the police to work together to end the menace of violence in universities in Sri Lanka.

The following steps are recommended to end violence in Sri Lankan Universities:

1. Publicly condemn all forms of ragging and violence in universities
2. Genuinely pledge to eliminate violence in universities
3. Invite all Vice Chancellors and Deans to discuss violence in universities.
4. Develop a scheme of rewards for academics who actively denounce violence
5. The law of the country must prevail within the universities and police and CID must be empowered to inquire, investigate and recommend suitable punishment including dismissal from universities if found guilty
6. Enable the development of a robust victim protection system and witness protection system

In conclusion, our contention is that all universi-

ties should be centers of learning, creativity, innovation and dissemination of knowledge. These hallowed institutions should certainly be free of violence, intimidation and harassment.

However, being realistic, in the present context, unless the university authorities take the bull by the horns, it may take a generation or two to bridge the gap between the well off & not so well off, competency / incompetency in English and the disparity between the urban and rural students.

My advice for the university students are;

1. Give a "Firm NO" to ragging
2. Agree that ragging should be eliminated completely
3. Do not be a silent victim of ragging
4. Do not be a silent witness to ragging of others.

Remember that each one of us has the responsibility to ensure that universities are safe and comfortable for all those who work and study in them.

When I was invited to deliver the commencement lecture to the new medical entrants in the 150th year of the Colombo Medical School in November 2019, and at the Foundation Sessions of the Sri Lanka Medical Association in 2020, I based my talk at both events on "Ending Violence in Sri Lankan universities".

Dr Anula Wijesundere
Consultant Physician
President CoMSAA – 2022

News from Our Students

Aragalaya 2022 - MFSU

Remembrance and commemoration of the student heroes who shed their blood and sacrificed their lives in the most dignified social revolutions including North Colombo private medical faculty fight, SAIMT fight "Aragalaya", which is annually organized by the Medical Faculty Students' Union and Medical Students' Welfare Society of the Colombo Medical Faculty was successfully staged this year too, on the 9th of November, at the Faculty TV room, with the honorable participation of the Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, the acting convener of the Inter University Students' Federation, the convener of the Medical Faculty Students' Action committee, representatives from the Students' Union, University of Colombo, Representatives from the student unions of the fellow medical faculties, past presidents and representatives of MFSU and students of the Faculty.

After 2 consecutive online celebrations organized amidst the COVID pandemic, it is a great achievement that we could have the commemoration as an onsite event, after last having it onsite in 2019.

The event was glorified with the singing, orchestra and drama events which were in remembrance of our dearest student heroes.

In collaboration with "Aragalaya 2022", the launch of remembrance poems "Aragalayaka Panhinda", the photography exhibition "Aragalayaka Man Salakunu", launch of the booklet "SAITM Aragalye Pasuwadana" were also there, in addition to the newest feature, timely lecture - "Aragalayaka Sanwada".



Swarandara - Aesthetic Circle

The musical event “Swarandara”, organized by the Aesthetic circle of the Faculty of Medicine under the guidance of MFSU/MSWS was held on the 20th of May 2022 at the Faculty Amphitheatre. Students from all batches from the MBBS and B.Sc. Physiotherapy undergraduate programs performed in this event depicting their talents in music, dance, and drama. The event was graced by the Dean, Vidya Jyothi Prof. Vajira Disanayake. Despite being the first open musical event after a two-year halt from the pandemic, it was received with much praise from the students.



Saptha Swarayen Obbata 3 - Aesthetic Circle

The third instalment of “Saptha Swarayen Obbata”, organized by the Aesthetic circle of the Faculty of Medicine under the guidance of the MFSU/MSWS was held on the 27th of July 2022 at the Faculty TV room. It included lengthy discussions into the aesthetic and historical aspects of a list of songs by the students from all batches from the MBBS and B.Sc. Physiotherapy undergraduate programs. The event was graced by Mr. Mahinda Prasad Masimbula as the chief guest as well as the Dean, Vidya Jothi Prof. Vajira Dissanayake and members of the academic staff. The event was appraised by the full house and received much positive feedback.



‘Thutu Sith’ - Rotaract Club

“Thutu Sith”, a project by the Community service avenue of the Rotaract club of Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo was held on the 16th of October 2022 and was a humanitarian project aimed at lending a hand to feed those in need. The community kitchen was held at the Bloemfontein hostel with the participation of the Rotaracters and the food made with love and kindness was distributed to over 300 beneficiaries at the Oberon Health care center premises. This project was sponsored by Q wave lifestyle magazine.



Insights to interview - Rotaract Club

In an extension of the mother-project Insights to Inspire, held last year, Insights to Interview was a project organized by the Professional Development Avenue of the Rotaract Club of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo to empower club members and students with skills to conduct an interview. A workshop under this initiative was held on the 31st of October 2022 at the faculty premises by the award-winning radio presenter Shareefa Thahir.

Escape the Doc – Rotaract Club

Escape the Doc, a Halloween themed Escape Room experience by the International Service Avenue of the Rotaract Club of Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo was held on the 3rd of November 2022 with the participation of the students and lecturers alike. The participants were asked to solve a series of clues and puzzles to find the key to unlock the Escape Room in this Halloween themed event that added much fun and color to the busy lives of the faculty members.



Medfest 2022 - Sports Association

Medfest is the annual inter-batch tournament, organized by the Faculty of Medicine Sports Association, where the students compete in various sports and games, with the goal of improving students' physical and mental capabilities as well as advancing cooperation and unity among the students. Medfest 2022 began with esports in May and continued in June and July with several sports and games such as carom, table tennis, chess, scrabble, badminton, swimming, basketball, cricket, netball, tennis, football, volleyball and athletics. The tournament was concluded successfully with the closing ceremony which was held at the University of Colombo indoor gymnasium, following the volleyball men's final match, on 20th July.



Friendly Scrabble Encounter

The first ever Friendly Scrabble Encounter between the academic staff and the students, organized by the Faculty of Medicine Teachers' Association in collaboration with the Scrabble team of Faculty of Medicine, was held successfully on 20th August 2022 at the faculty main hall with the participation of several lecturers and the students.



Ama Dham Sara 2022 - Buddhist Association

Medical Students' Buddhist Association commemorated the holy Poson Poya Day, by organizing the annual Bhakti Geetha recital, held in the evening of 23rd of June 2022, at the main auditorium of UCFM tower. The night was concluded successfully with the participation of medical and physiotherapy students of the choir and orchestra as well as some members of the academic staff, bringing to life the traditional Buddhist songs. Afterwards, the students of the choir and orchestra visited several wards at De Soyza Maternity Hospital and Students' hostels performing for the patients and hostellers.



Wassana Diyawara 2022

The annual humanitarian programme, Wassana Diyawara 2022 organized by Medical Students' Buddhist Association is the 17th project in a successful line of projects. This year programme was held in Wathuyaya Sri Sumana Vidyalaya in the divisional secretariat of Kuruwita in Ratnapura district. The project began with the educational programme aimed at Grades 10 and 11 students sitting for the Ordinary Level examination.

A concurrent motivational programme and academic lessons on the subjects of Science, Maths and English were conducted by the students of the faculty at the school premises. Along with the educational program, construction and refurbishment of the school premises with the expansion of the school main building is currently underway. As the final phase of the Wassana Diyawara, a health promotion camp was conducted for the benefit of the surrounding community with the participation of consultants of various specialties, medical officers and the student body.



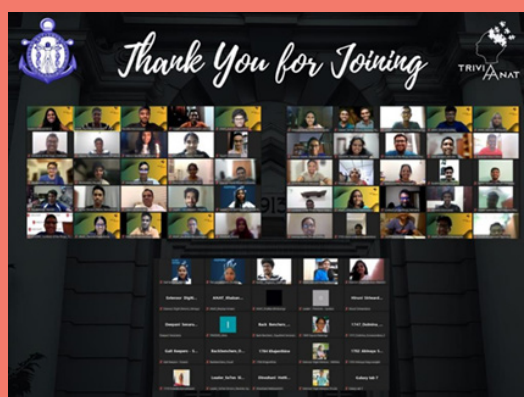
Debate Workshops for Medical Students

The Medical Students' Chamber of Debate launched its Debate Workshops for Medical Students; the first of the three scheduled sessions under this project took place on October 22, 2022 from 2.00 PM to 4.30 PM at the UCFM Tower First Floor Tute Room. The session was open to all medical students of the faculty. The motion of the day was 'This House Regrets national referendums being used as a means to make political decisions' with a team, each comprising 3 members, in proposition and opposition in the style of World's Schools Debating Championship [WSDC]. The session was adjourned with an analysis of the speaking and related skills of participants. The second session took place on November 4, 2022, at the same venue under the guidance of Mr. Chetan Perera, a professional debate coach that has previously represented Sri Lanka. The session involved a discussion of debating fundamentals, the pathway to effective debate training and improvement as well as an introduction to British Parliamentary style debating, the style of choice of the World University Debating Championship. A discussion under the topic 'This House Regrets violent sports' was also held with a focus on topic framing and definition. The session was adjourned with discussions of a regular practice schedule. Further debate practices, workshops and joint sessions are being planned.



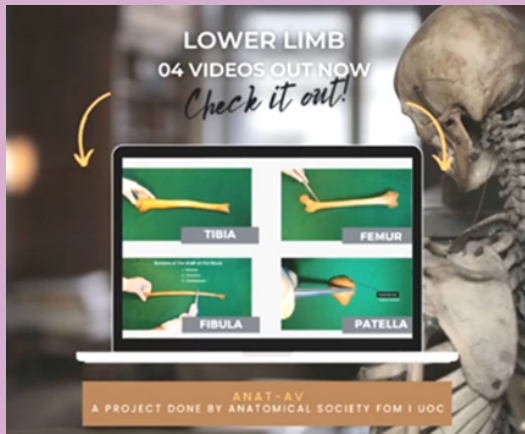
TriviAnat - Anatomical Society

TriviAnat was a quiz competition held for the first time via an online platform to impart knowledge regarding the subject of anatomy using a lively, enjoyable, and interesting approach. With a series of questions encompassing a wide variety of topics ranging from the history of anatomy to modern surgical procedures, the event was fruitful and pleasurable to all the participants. The competition consisted of 2 main rounds: a meme round and a rapid-fire round. The rapid-fire round included 10 cycles each with 3 rounds, where the participants had to answer verbally and in written form. The event took place on the 8th of January 2022, with the participation of the Dean, lecturers of the anatomy department, and the students of the faculty.



Anat-AV

Anat AV is a project by the Anatomical Society mainly focused on helping students of anatomy to face a viva. This series of 4 videos included bones of the lower limb – the femur, patella, fibula, and tibia. The videos explained the details of anatomical landmarks, muscle attachments, and actions. The videos were released on January 12, 2022. The second video series provide a detailed description of the several skull bones including the skull base, skull vault, foramina in the skull base and the facial skeleton. The important anatomical landmarks are clearly demonstrated using real specimens and the distinctive features of skull region are highlighted. The videos were released on July 13, 2022. Videography, audio editing, dubbing, video editing, and promotions were performed by the members of the society's 2019 batch members. The Anatomy department provided the necessary specimens and appropriate recording locations. Through these videos, the Anat AV YouTube channel managed to hit 1000+ subscribers with approximately 1K views.



An Art Tomy

An_Art_Tomy is an Anatomy-themed virtual art competition, and its inaugural iteration was held in the month of January 2022. This competition was open to 2020 A/L medical students from different universities across the island. Contestants were told that their artwork has to be based on a theme related to Anatomy of the human body at the same time reflecting their imagination and creativity. The deadline to submit their artworks was 19th January 2022. After processing the art sent by the contestants, they were uploaded to the official Facebook page of the Anatomical society (www.facebook.com/asfomuoc/). The number of reactions to each individual artwork posted on our Facebook page were taken as a number of votes. After processing the number of votes, the results were announced on noon of 25th of January, 2022. The winners' prizes were sponsored by the Jeya Book Centre.

TriviAnat 2022

The Anatomical Society of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, successfully held its second ever annual trivia night – TriviAnat 2022 – on October 28, 2022, at the UCFM Tower Second Floor Mini-auditorium at 5.30 PM. The event was open to all medical students and staff of the faculty. This year's event was distinguished by it being Halloween-themed, and it being held onsite at faculty premises for the first time. TriviAnat 2022 comprised a quiz of three rounds testing the participants' knowledge of anatomy and associated facts related to popular culture, as well as Halloween-themed games and food stalls. Participation in the quiz was open to all Colombo Medical Faculty students. The Welcome Address was given by the President, Abirthan Rajendiran. At the end of the first round those gathered in the hall were addressed by the Patron of the Society, Vidya Jyothi Prof. Vajira Dissanayake, the Dean, followed by the launching of the Anatomical Society's official Instagram page. Nuha Cassim, the Secretary, delivered the vote of thanks just prior to the end of the event. Jeya Book Center was invaluable as the Platinum Sponsor of TriviAnat 2022.



Social media-based health promotion program

The Golden Z Club conducted a social media-based program targeting health promotion in Sri Lanka's growing elderly population. A series of health promotion posts on relevant topics such as physical health and mental health, with 2 short videos elaborating on nutrition and exercise. A social media challenge, #GoldenPlate where youths from within and outside the faculty were tagged to prepare a healthy meal together with their families and share pictures of that meal. Over 53 families took part and posted images. As the primary networking partner for the project, HelpAge Sri Lanka shared digital versions of the posts and videos among registered Elders' Clubs across the country.

They are currently working towards distributing the content as printed leaflets.



Mahameraka Mehewarak

The Golden Z club of Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo organized a social media and on-site program celebrating the paid and unpaid labor of women in Sri Lanka. Posts on the contributions of Sri Lankan working women were released, along with an interview of ground level and management level workers in a locally owned garment factory. On-site event on the 1st of May 2022 (International Workers' Day) for both employed and unemployed women of a chosen MOH area titled Mahameraka Mehewarak, the event was held at the Madiwela Maternal and Child Care Clinic under the Pitakotte MOH, with the permission and support of the MOH staff. A session highlighting the labour of women both at work and at home was held, followed by a creative newspaper costing session for entertainment. The women were given tokens of appreciation alongside packages of dry rations and vegetable seeds. Funds were raised by the club through the sale of food, drinks, handmade cards and art commissions.



Her Online Presence

The Golden Z club of Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo organized an online workshop, "Her Online Presence", done in partnership with the Digital Wellbeing Initiative with the goals of elucidating participants on the constituents of female-targeted cyber-exploitation & violence, the relevant authorities and procedures to report such crimes, as well as the appropriate preventive guidelines to follow. The webinar was successfully conducted on the 4th of September. The project managed to raise significant awareness on this contemporary topic with the aid of interactive speakers and fun games that focused on participant involvement.



Safety on the Move

The Golden Z club of the faculty is conducting a street harassment awareness campaign “Safety on the move” via an online platform. Currently they are circulating social media posts regarding this matter, and they are hoping to educate the public, especially girls, on strategies to face street harassment.



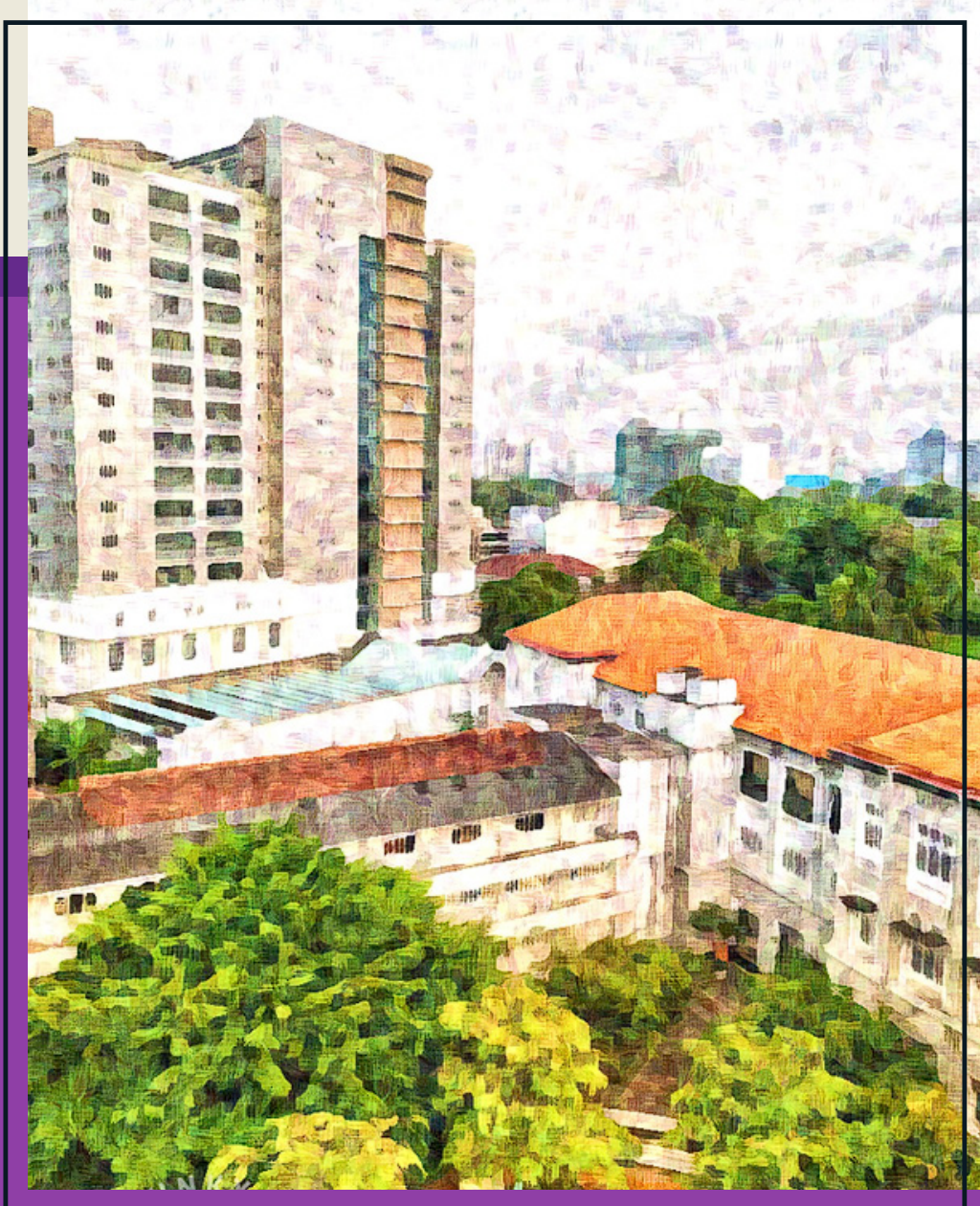
Medical Students' Debate - Annual Academic Sessions of Sri Lanka College of Psychiatrists

The Medical Students' Chamber of Debate was involved in the selection of a team to represent the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, at the Medical Students' Debate of the 19th Annual Academic Sessions of the Sri Lanka College of Psychiatrists. It was held on August 7, 2022 at The Jetwing Blue, Negombo. The motion was 'The use of cannabis should be legalized in Sri Lanka', with the Chamber team in proposition and the team fielded by the Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Jayewardene in opposition. The Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, was represented by Nuha Cassim, Minul Doluweera, Lukman Shafi and Druvinka Vaas. The preparatory team also included Harindu Kirihena and Tehan Siriwardena.



This is your Newsletter

Do you have an interesting story or anecdote from your time at the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo? We would love to hear from you and share it with our membership. Please send your contributions to the editors at comsaa2011@gmail.com.



We thank our alumni and students who provided articles for this issue.

Editors

Dr Dineshani Hettiarachchi
Dr Rameshkumar Thevarajah