



From the President



As the new President of the PeMSAA-UK, I welcome all our members, alumni and well-wishers of the Faculty of Medicine, Peradeniya. I am looking forward to working with the dynamic Committee I have to help the students of The Faculty of Medicine, Peradeniya.

The outgoing President Dr. Krish Radhakrishnan together with the Management Committee has done a superb job setting up this Association and developing ways of helping the students and responding to appeals for help when needed. My heartfelt congratulations go to all of them.

COVID-19 raised its ugly head and PeMSAA-UK also suffered as many other voluntary organizations did. Our fund-raising activities grounded to a halt. But in spite of this, we have managed to honour our commitments. As the President, I intend to continue with the projects already initiated. These are:

- The PEMSAA academic awards for postgraduates and undergraduates
- Awarding of Scholarships and Bursaries
- Provision of the Journal of International Medicine and Surgery
- Mentoring support to the alumni arriving in the UK.

At present, we are in the process of providing textbooks for the library following a request from Prof. Channa Ratnatunga and the librarian. Thanks to generous donations from alumni and well-wishers, we have managed to purchase most of the books. The book list is on the website for your perusal and any donations are welcome.

We intend to continue with our webinar series. A report on the webinar in February 2022 can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter. I thank Krish for organizing this.

As the country is returning towards 'normality', we held a Spring Event on 5th March 2022. This was a fun-filled event and also brought much-needed funds to the Association. My thanks go to Uditha and Lal for masterminding this event. A report can be found in this Newsletter.

The membership of an organization is its backbone. I am passionate about increasing our membership. There must be many more PeMSAA alumni in the UK who are not members. Please encourage them to join to help our alma mater and its students and graduates in furthering their careers.

As the President, I intend to do my best to further develop this fledgling Association and hope that all of you will help and support me and the Committee in the future.

Padma Samarawickrama

Academic activities

Autumn Webinar

We are delighted that our Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022 Webinars were great successes. Autumn 2021 Webinar on 18th September 2021 on “*The Role of Microbiome in Health and Disease*” was by Prof Tim Spector, Professor of Genetic Epidemiology and Director of the Twins UK Registry at Kings College, London. He has done extensive work on Microbiome and their nutritional and immunological benefits.

He discussed some of the key roles of our microbes including the programming of the immune system, providing nutrients for our cells, and preventing colonisation by harmful bacteria and viruses. He touched upon on studies done on identical twins that show different population of Microbiome, which could be the reasons for different health conditions, behaviour, and other character changes in the identical twins.

The gut Microbiome in particular, has been linked to a plethora of diseases and conditions, from diabetes to autism and anxiety to obesity. When purchasing probiotics, it is important to buy a product which supports vast amounts and variety of Microbiome.

Spring 2022 Webinar on 26th February 2022 on “*Updates on Cancer Care*”

The panel of speakers was:

Dr Abhijit Singh Gill: General Practitioner in Hammersmith and Fulham with a special interest in Oncology. Clinical Lead for the Acute Diagnostic Oncology Clinic at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

Dr Prasanna Sooriakumaran: Lead for Urology, Cleveland Clinic London, Consultant Urological & Robotic Surgeon, University College London Hospitals.

Professor Kemal Deen: Consultant Colorectal and General Surgeon, Sri Lanka. He was previously Chairman of Surgery and senior Professor at the University of Kelaniya Medical School.

Dr Nirupa Murugesu: Consultant in Medical Oncology at St George’s University Hospital. Cancer Lead for Genomics at Guy’s & ST Thomas Foundation Trust and Clinical Lead in Cancer studies at Genomics and Cancer Studies at Genomics England.

The Federation of the Royal College of Physicians approved both Webinars for CPD credits.

We are proud that the participants of the webinars rated them as excellent events. The recordings of the webinars are available at PeMSAA-UK website (www.pemsaa.uk)

Krish 7 Radhakrishnan

Academic Secretary

A visit to the Faculty



It was a great privilege to formally attend the faculty since I left the Department of Pharmacology in 2004. The event was well organised & should like to thank the Dean, Faculty of Medicine Prof V Pinto, President of PeMSAA, Prof. Kudagammana and secretary Dr. Champa Rathnatunge for their invaluable efforts.

As we are aware, the PeMSAA-UK is a young Alumni organisation and our endeavour is to foster and promote welfare of the Faculty by sharing knowledge, skills and also

to facilitate education and research activities in the Faculty. I am proud to say our partnership with mother PeMSAA and the Faculty in the recent times has grown from strength to strength and that has paved the way for us to do some collaborative projects for the benefit of the undergraduates as well as the postgraduate trainees. The Awards Event reported elsewhere in this Newsletter is a particularly good example. It is my fervent hope that this trend and the partnership will continue to grow in the future. I would like to congratulate the well-deserved winners of this year’s Research Award and hope that this will inspire at least a few of these students to continue to do research and become future academics. In addition, a significant credit should also go to the mentors and supervisors of these projects and the Dean and staff of the Faculty for facilitating research within the undergraduate medical curriculum.

Ashan Gumaratne

President-Elect, PeMSAA-UK

Spring Delight – a cracker of an event!

Introduction

Life needed to get back to normal after COVID. PeMSAA Social Event was the ideal tonic for this at Iver Village Hall on 5th of March. It was promoted as a 'fun event like no other' but no one had the faintest idea of what fun was to be dished out. Of course, we could not disregard COVID as everyone were requested to do the Lateral Flow Tests which were checked over by the smiling ladies at the Reception.

Lunch

We from Peradeniya do things differently, always setting new standards. The day started with sumptuous typical Sri Lankan rice and curry. Of course, after such a bellyful, keeping everyone awake was a challenge. After two years, many 'Hello machangs' we heard from all corners of the hall. It was pleasing to see many trainees joining with their families.

Fun and games

The fun event was a contest between traditional Pera residential halls, Arunachalam, Ramanathan, Wijewardena and Mars Hall teams. Well, feeling sleepy was the furthest for everyone as straight after lunch the action started in the way of "Gin gan guli, gin gan goo" song with each team taking turns to sing verses. This was followed by word chain relay kept everyone cognitively stimulated and challenged. The alphabet song was the tonic for action packed 'nursery rhymes' by each group with each team trying to get the nod of the super judges. The formal welcome song based on "Welcome to PeMSAA world" based on the song by Jim Reeves "Welcome to my world" "giving a very warm welcome to all including PeMSAA and non-PeMSAA members, was sung by Uditha Jayatunga.

This was followed by a skit, "Harley Street consultation" by Dr. Nodor King and his patient Mr. Aney Apoi which left everyone in stitches.

Music and drama

Expert singing performances by Mike Eswaran and Jayantha Perera added further variety to this event. Ruwan Soysa's presentation on history of *baila* took us back to "Oh to be in England" and "varsity kello" songs. Once again, these got the whole crowd participating in singing backed up by Hiran, the one-man band adding more spice to the day. The group dancing competition showed the variety of dancing talents of all in groups with so many atypical moves on display making it very difficult for the judges. It was time for tea giving a pause to entertainment, but the laughter scale went up another notch, in the last skit "Medical records dept at Peradeniya Hospital" starring senior Mr. Malaseka and the 'new recruit' Mr Kale Kanni.' Finally, a brief sing along going back to well-known vintage Sri Lankan songs with many roving mics before the curtains came down. The surprise of the day was the most beautifully decorated cupcakes made by Sharmila Jayatunga to the winning team Arunachalam.

Feedback

Post event feedback confirmed an almost 5/5 feedback on the day's proceedings giving Lal Jayasekera the Social Secretary a big sigh of relief!!! Overall, it was a wonderful day of truly unexpected fun in typical Pera style for both young and old. Thank you so much for all who made the effort to join us and a big "Thank You" to the Social Committee and all others to make it a truly memorable day.

Uditha Jayatunga

Secretary, PeMSAA - UK



PeMSAA-UK Academic Award 2021 winners - undergraduate category



PeMSAA-UK Academic Awards for 2021 for “Research, Audit and Quality Improvement Projects” were offered to undergraduates and postgraduates. We received excellent submissions from undergraduates. The local Faculty Assessment Panel and the PeMSAA-UK Academic Award Panel members unanimously agreed on the winners of the 2021 PeMSAA-UK Undergraduate Academic Award. Our heartiest congratulations go to Ms. Umangi Wathsala Karunaratne, the lead Investigator and her fellow team members for their exceptional work on “*Effect Of L-Theanine on Selective Attention In a Traffic-Related Reaction Task in Sleep-Deprived Young Adults: A Double-Blind Placebo-Controlled, Crossover Study*”

The dissertation of their research project is available at our website www.pemsaa.uk



Dr. Champa Ratnatunga awarding PeMSAA-UK scholarships to two of the three recipients

2022 PeMSAA-UK Academic Award for Research, Audits and Quality Improvement Projects

We are delighted to invite submissions from the undergraduates and the postgraduates of the Peradeniya Medical Faculty

Closing date for submissions is 31 July 2022