

# **SLACPT**

The Official Newsletter of the Sri Lanka Association of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics

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#### **SLACPT News**

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## **SLACPT Theme 2023-2024**

Equitably available, affordable, safe and quality use of medicines for challenging times

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## President's Message



Dear Members,

As we present the fourth and the final newsletter of the SLACPT Council for 2023/2024, I take this opportunity to reflect on the significant activities and achievements of the past two years. It has been a remarkable journey for SLACPT, marked by dedication, collaboration, and meaningful contributions to the field of clinical pharmacology.

#### **A Landmark Achievement**

In 2023, SLACPT proudly went global by joining the International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (IUPHAR). This milestone reflects our commitment to advancing the field on a global stage and opens doors to wider opportunities for growth and collaboration.

#### **Key Contributions to National Healthcare**

- Pharmaceutical Supply System Analysis: SLACPT conducted an in-depth situational analysis of the pharmaceutical supply system, holding numerous stakeholder meetings and analyzing data. The comprehensive report, submitted to the Ministry of Health, the Treasury, and the Parliament, provided critical recommendations to help address the pharmaceutical sector crisis.
- **Submission of information on IV Immunoglobulin**: Responding to requests from the courts, SLACPT provided reports addressing the queries raised on the IV immunoglobulin issue, further solidifying our role in shaping policy and practice.

#### **Empowering Students and Academic Achievements**

- IUPHAR Poster Competition: SLACPT actively promoted the World Smart Medication Day poster competition, and we are proud that Sri Lankan students were shortlisted among the top 10 in 2023 and 2024. A student from the University of Colombo won the prestigious best poster award in 2024.
- Interfaculty Pharmacology Quiz: A first for SLACPT, this event was efficiently organized in 2024, by Prof Chamila Mettananda and Dr Leonard Wanninayake fostering collaboration and promoting pharmacology among students.

#### ClinPharm 2024 - A Collaborative Success

The highlight of our term was ClinPharm 2024, organized in collaboration with IUPHAR. With the participation from renowned international experts in Clinical Pharmacology, the event was a testament to teamwork and meticulous execution. We had international delegates participating through the World

Health Organisation and IUPHAR. Many details of the conference are included in this newsletter. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated council members, especially, Prof Priyanga Ranasinghe, energetic secretary ably supported by Dr Chiranthi Liyanage, the assistant secretary and Prof Pradeepa Jayawardana vice president taking the brunt of coordinating scientific abstracts and compilation of proceedings and Prof Chandani Wanigatunga supporting many activities with her vice counsel. Dr Sujeevani Kurukulasuriya supported by Dr Leonard Wanninayake handled the finances meticulously. We are grateful to IUPHAR, National Science Foundation, Ministry of Health and all the registrants who made possible to hold this international conference. It was heartening to receive all the feedback on ClinPharm 2024 by the many who joined.

#### **Educational and Clinical Impact**

- MD Pharmacology MCQ Courses: Over two years, four courses were held, earning nearly one
  million rupees for SLACPT while promoting the speciality. I thank Dr Sujeevani Kurukulasooriya, our
  treasurer, who coordinated this so efficiently.
- **Guidelines on Rational Use of Medicines**: Collaborating with the SLMA intercollegiate committee, and other relevant colleges, we developed guidelines and monitoring mechanisms for high-cost medicines and commonly used OPD medicines.
- **Webinars on current topics**: The guidelines developed were disseminated through SLMA therapeutic updates, with few more planned for the next year. Several other webinars were held in collaboration with many other speciality colleges throughout the two years, promoting rational use of medicines and medicines regulation.

#### **Disseminating information on SLACPT activities**

- **SLACPT newsletters**: In these two years, we released 4 newsletters, each covering the activities in the preceding 6 months. I thank Dr Rameshkumar Thevarajah, the editor who worked tirelessly in preparing these timely, under my guidance.
- **SLACPT webpage**: The information pertaining to our activities, especially ClinPharm 2024 was provided through our website, efficiently handled by Prof Priyanga Ranasinghe.

#### **Looking Ahead**

Our work continues, with few of the activities initiated still underway. As I conclude my tenure, I express my sincere gratitude to every council member and all SLACPT members for your unwavering support. I wish the incoming council, led by Prof. Chandani Wanigatunga, every success. Together, let us take SLACPT to greater heights.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Warm regards,

Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy, President, SLACPT

# Message from the Secretary



Dear Members and Friends,

As we conclude another remarkable year for the Sri Lanka Association of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (SLACPT), it is a pleasure to reflect on the strides we have made in advancing clinical pharmacology in Sri Lanka. Our journey in 2024 has been marked by collaborative initiatives, impactful academic activities, and initiative to strengthen our role in the healthcare system of Sri Lanka, in line with the theme of the present council "Equitably available, affordable, safe and quality use of medicines for challenging times".

The highlight of the period undoubtedly was ClinPharm 2024, a testament to the dedication of our council and the broader SLACPT community. The conference brought together leading international experts and showcased the importance of medication safety in addressing contemporary healthcare challenges. It was inspiring to see the enthusiastic participation of our members and collaborators in this event, which emphasized the need for rational and safe use of medicines.

Beyond academic events, SLACPT has made significant contributions toward policy and practice. The webinars, therapeutic updates, and collaborative initiatives, such as developing guidelines on the rational use of high-cost medicines, underscore our commitment to addressing key healthcare challenges. Our collaboration with national and international organizations has been instrumental in driving these efforts forward.

The present council's tenure has been marked by dedication and teamwork. As this council completes its term, I extend my heartfelt thanks to each member for their unwavering commitment and contributions. As we move into 2025, I invite all members to join hands with us, as we continue to work toward our shared vision of promoting clinical pharmacology for better healthcare outcomes in Sri Lanka. It is also my pleasure to warmly welcome the incoming council and our new President. I am confident they will lead SLACPT to even greater heights. I wish them all the best for a successful tenure ahead.

Wishing you and your families a joyful holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

Warm regards,

Professor Priyanga Ranasinghe Secretary, SLACPT

### ClinPharm 2024

SLACPT held its biennial academic sessions for the year 2024 from 10th to 13th July 2024 under the theme of "Challenges in Medication Without Harm - Safety, Quality and Rational Use" at Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH), Colombo in collaboration with International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (IUPHAR). ClinPharm 2024 comprised of two workshops, three symposia, three plenary sessions, two panel discussions, oration and a site visit to a medication safety demonstration site highlighting the importance of Medication Safety to the local context.

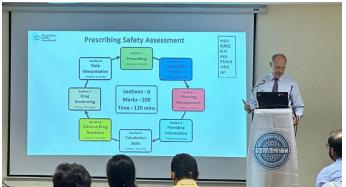
#### **Pre-Congress Workshop - Prescribing Safety Assessment**

A pre-congress workshop on the Prescribing Safety Assessment organized jointly with the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC), was held on July 10, 2024, at the UCFM Tower, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. The event commenced with a welcome address by Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy, President of the SLACPT, followed by an address by Professor Vajira Dissanayake, President of the SLMC.

The workshop featured distinguished speakers, including Professor Simon Maxwell, Medical Director of the Prescribing Safety Assessment, British Pharmacological Society, UK, and Mr.Peter Wright, Head of Commercial Operations at the British Pharmacological Society, UK. They presented on the topic "Introduction to the Prescribing Safety Assessment in the United Kingdom." Subsequently, Professor Priyanga Ranasinghe, Secretary, SLACPT, presented on "Developing a Sri Lankan Prescribing Safety Assessment: Plans for Sri Lanka and Essential Local Infrastructure."

Professor Simon Maxwell conducted a session on "Writing Prescribing Safety Assessment Style Questions," which was followed by an interactive group work. Participants revised Prescribing Safety Assessment-style questions to align with Sri Lankan requirements and engaged in peer review of questions developed by local authors. The workshop provided valuable insights and laid the groundwork for establishing prescribing safety assessment in Sri Lanka.

















#### **Inauguration Ceremony**

Inauguration ceremony of the ClinPharm 2024 was held on 11th July 2024 at the Bandaranaike International Conference Hall - Lotus Hall. Chief guest of the event was Dr. Palitha Mahipala, Secretary, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka and the Guest of Honour was Professor Simon Maxwell, Medical Director, Prescribing Safety Assessment, British Pharmacological Society, UK and Professor of Clinical Pharmacology and Prescribing, University of Edinburgh, UK.

The ceremonial procession and lighting of the oil lamp kicked start the event and the guests were welcomed by Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy, President, SLACPT. This was followed by the Keynote Address by the Guest of Honour, Professor Simon Maxwell and the address by the Chieft Guest, Dr. Palitha Mahipala.

SLACPT Oration was delived by Professor Caroline Samer, Professor of Pharmacology and Clinical Toxicology, University of Geneva, Switzerland, President Elect, IUPHAR and Chair of Clinical and Translational Section. The oration was on the topic "Precision medicine and pharmacotherapy: Right drug at the right dose for the right patient". The lecture was timely and included the evidence for the local context as well and was much appreicated by the audience.

The event conlcuded with the Vote of Thanks by Professor Priyanga Ranasinghe, Secretary, SLACPT.

































#### **Plenaries**

Plenary 1 was delivered by Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy on the topic "The global burden of medication related harm and WHO global patient safety challenge: Medication without harm". This plenary set the stage and gave a brief about the different areas which were discussed in the conference including the WHO strategic framework comprising of the four domains and three key action areas for implementation.

Plenary on ensuring medication safety in clinical trials was delivered by Professor Asita de Silva, Senior Professor of Pharmacology, University of Kelaniya. He highlighted the importance of International Conference of Harmonization Good Clinical Practice guidelines in ensuring the rights and safety of participants and providing uniform standards for the conduct of clinical trials.

Plenary 3 was delivered by Dr. Lauren Walker, Reader in Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, University of Liverpool, UK on "Application of AI for medication safety". It was an insightful lecture on use of AI tools incorporating individual patient characteristics to predict risk of an adverse drug-drug interaction and need for medicine optimization.













#### **Symposia**

Symposium on Domains to address for medication safety was chaired by Professor Pradeepa Jayawardane and Professor Priyanga Ranasinghe. Professor Chandanie Wanigatunge, Senior Professor of Pharmacology, University of Sri Jayawardenepura spoke on "Patients and public: Medication literacy - addressing the challenges" followed by Professor Rohini Fernandopulle, Senior Professor of Pharmacology, Kotelawala Defence University on "Medicines as products: Substandard and falsified medicines". Professor Nilima Kshirsagar, Former National Chair of Indian Council of Medical Research elaborated on Health care professional: Rational use of medicines and evaluation. Dr S. Sridharan, Deputry Director General of Health Services, Ministry of Health delivered on "Systems and practices: Incident reporting in a no blame culture", followed by Professor Simon Maxwell on "Root cause analysis and learning from errors".















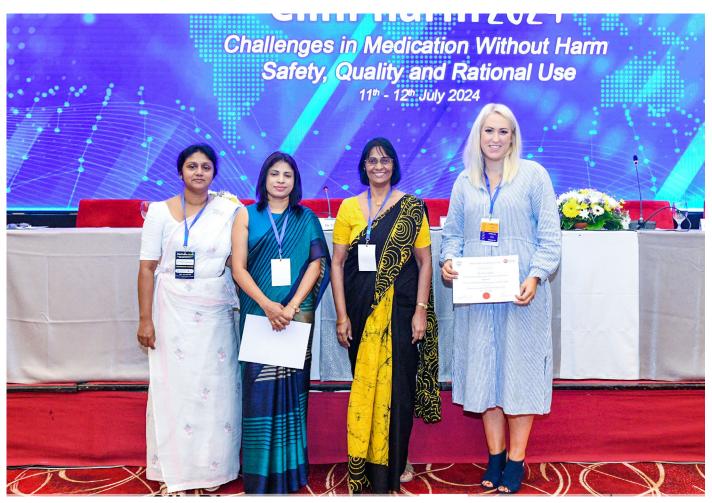
The symposium on Key action areas for medication safety was chaired by Profeessor Chandanie Wanigatunge and Dr Thilanka Seneviratne. The speakers were Dr Lauren Walker, Reader in Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, University of Liverpool, UK who spoke on Rational deprescibing to address polypharmacy, Professor Nithushi Samaranayake, Professor in Pharmacy, University of Sri Jayawardenepura who spoke on High-risk and look-alike, sound-alike medicines: Strategies for prevention and Professor Chamila Mettananda, Professor in Pharmacology, University of Kelaniya on the topic of Medication reconcillation and transitions of care.











Symposium on Medical safety curriculum was chaired by Professor Chamila Mettananda and Dr Thiyahini Sunil Navaratinaraja. Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy provided an overview of the WHO medication safety curriculum guide. Professor Pradeepa Jayawardane, Professor in Pharmacology, University of Sri Jayawardenepura, Dr Uthpali Mannapperuma, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy, University of Colombo and Professor Thamara Amarasekara, Professor in Nursing, University of Sri Jayawardenepura spoke on the implementation in medical, pharmacy and nursing curricula respectively. Dr Thilanka Seneviratne, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology, University of Peradeniya, gave a presentation on Simulation for teaching medication safety components. Ms. Victoria Rutter, CEO, Commonwealth Pharmacists Association, UK and Ms Beth Ward, Strategic Lead Workforce Capacity Building, Commonwealth Pharmacists Association, UK spoke on Optimising medication safety through pharmacist capacity and capability building.















#### **Panel Discussions**

Panel discussion on Prescribing Safety Assessment was chaired by Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy and Dr Sujeevani Kurkulasuriya. Professor Simon Maxwell spoke on the model in United Kingdom followed by Professor Vajira Dissanayake, President SLMC, speaking on the role of Sri Lanka Medical Council. Professor Priyanga Ranasinghe spoke on the topic "Addresing the challenges of implementation in Sri Lanka". Professor Nilima Kshirsagar, Former National Chair, Indian Council of Medical Research and Professor Sarah Hilmer, Professor of Geriatric Pharmacology, University of Sydney, Australia spoke on the Experience in India and Australia respectively.











Panel discussion on Sharing country experiences in medication safety activities was chaired by Professor Chamari Weeraratne and Dr Sujeevani Kurukulasuriya. Dr Chiranthi Liyanage, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology, University of Colombo shared the experiences from Sri Lanka on Natinoal action plan on medication safety. Professor Nilima Kshirsagar shared her experience from India on Evaluating fixed dose combination. Professor Caroline Samer, Professor of Pharmacology and Clinical Toxicology, University of Geneva, Switzerland, Dr Lauren Walker, Reader in Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, University of Liverpool, UK and Professor Ian Coombs Professor, School of Pharmacy, University of Queensland, Australia shared the experiences from Switzerland, UK and Australia respectively. Dr Sagari Kiriwandeniya, Director, Colombo South Teaching Hospital shared her experience on implementing activities in a tertiary care hospital. Dr Upuli Wijemanne, Director, Directorate Healthcare Quality and Safety, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka spoke on the challenges in implementing activities at national hospital.















#### Free Paper Sessions

Twelve oral presentations and 21 poster presentations were presented at the ClinPharm 2024. The prize for the best oral presentation was given for the presentation titled "Association between development of atrioventricular (AV) blocks and reverse tick sign of digoxin effect in acute yellow oleander (Thevetia peruviana) posioning patients" by Eriyawa WMABW, Jayamanne SF, Lokunarangoda NC, Francis GR, Jayawardane P. First runners up was for the presentation "Frequency of pharmacogenomic variants affecting efficacy and safety of anti-cancer drugs among Sri Lankans" by Manchanayake MM, Ranasinghe P, Sirisena ND, Vishnukanthan T, Ariadurai JN, Thilakarathne S, Priyadarshani CDN, Hendalage DPB, Dissanayake VHW. Second runners up was for the presentation "Artifical intelligence assisted automated essay scoring tool to evaluate Short Answer Questions in Pharmacology" by Seneviratne HMTW, Manatunga SS.







In poster presentations, the presentation titled "Pharmacogenomic variants affecting safety and efficacy of anti-microbiral drugs in a South Asian population from Sri Lanka" by Jeyapragasam H, Ranasinghe P, Sirisena ND, Priyadarshani CDN, Hendalage BPD, Dissanayake VHW won the first place. First runners up was won by "Antibacterial consumption in a private hospital in Jaffna, Sri Lanka" by Haridas CS, Navaratinaraja TS, Sri Ranganathan S. Second runners up was for the presentation "Development of indicators to monitor the safe use of medicines by patients in Sri Lanka" by Weliwatte IP, Samaranayake NR, Jayawardane P, Galappatthy P.







Venessa Andrea Nugara of A/L 2016 batch of University of Colombo was given the certificate for winning one of the best two posters in the poster competition organized by the IUPHAR for the World Smart Medication Day 2024 on the theme of Drug Evaluation at the Extremes of Ages. Bhagya Madhushani Bandara from University of Sri Jayawardenapura was given the certificate for winning the national 2nd place.





At the ClinPharm 2024, certificates and trophies were also given to the winners of the SLACPT Inter-Faculty Pharmacology Quiz 2024. University of Sri Jayawardenapura team, Osura Weerawardene, Viduni Suraweera, Praveen Fernando, Tharushi Liyanage and Hashini Chandrapala won the competition. Rajarata University of Sri Lanka team, Prishal Morapitiya, Shehan Tharuka, Ishara Samarathunga, Dilshan Sachinthaka and Sanduni Nimesha was the first runners up and University of Colombo team, Nethmini Rathnayake, Rosalie Ratnayake, Keethana Muhunthan, Chamod Perera and Sandhara Athukorala was the second runners up. Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy, President, SLACPT and Professor Chamila Mettananda, quiz master presented the certificates and the trophy to the winners of the quiz competition.

#### December 2024

































#### **Post-Congress Site Visit**

Post-congress site visit was organized at the Colombo South Teaching Hospital on Demonstration on medication safety - implenting activities on medication saety in a tertiary care hospital on 13th July 2024. This site visit was organised mainly for the overseas guests from Pakistan, Kenya and Mongolia, who joined the conference supported by World Health Organisation, Global Patient Safety Collaborative to demonstrate medication safety activities initiated in the CSTH, which is identified as a demonstration site. They shared their experiences on medication safety activities in their respective countries. Participants from National Hospital of Sri Lanka (NHSL), which is also going to be a medication safety demonstration site joined the site visit, as an effort to help them for implementation of activities in NHSL.

The participants and delegates were welcomed by Dr Sagari Kiriwandeniya, Director, Colombo South Teaching Hospital, who also spoke on strategies for implementing medication safety activities in the hospital. Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy, President, SLACPT spoke on development and implementation of a medication safety practice package and plans for evaluation. Dr. Sai Niranjan, Deputy Directory, Colombo South Teaching Hospital, shared his experiences on implementing electronic prescribing and paperless OPD. Ms. Wasana Bandara, Pharmacist, Colombo South Teaching Hospital shared her experiences in labelling of dispensed medicines in local languages and patient counselling activities. This was followed by a discussion and a visit to the OPD clinics, wards and ICUs to observe the implentation of medication safety activities.









#### **Post-Congress Workshop**

Post-congress workshop on Rational and Cost-Effective prescribing was held on 16th July 2024 at the UCFM Tower, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. Participants were welcomed by Dr Ananda Wijewickrama, President, Sri Lanka Medical Association and Chairman, National Medicines Regulatory Authority. Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy introduced the workshop to the participants. Dr Chiranthi Liyanage, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology, University of Colombo, explained the key findings from the SLACPT report to the Ministry of Health on Pharmaceutical Purchases for Sri Lanka and expenditure.

Later, guidelines for usage of high cost medicines and monitoring plans developed with relevant specialist colleges and associations were discussed. Dr Chiranthi Liyanage discussed on intravenous immunoglobulins. Professor Chamila Mettananda, Professor in Pharmacology, University of Kelaniya and Dr Suranga Manilgama, President, Sri Lanka College of Internal Medicine discussed on human albumin solution. Dr Chandima Thevarapperuma, Cosultant Haematologist, Lady Ridgeway Hospital and Dr Sujeevani Kurukulasuriya, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology, University of Kelaniya discussed on the use of Factor VIII. Use of tenecteplase in cardiology was discussed by Dr MBF Rahuman, Consultant Cardiologist, NHSL and Dr Disna Amaratunga, Consultant Cardiologist, NHSL.

Dr Vipula Bataduwaarachchi, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology, University of Colombo, spoke on the guidelines for commonly used medicines from OPDs: targetting paracetamol, NSAIDs, omeprazole, steroids, antibiotics, vitamins and topical anti-fungals. Dr Dilini Chandrasiri, Lecturer in Pharmacology, University of Colombo discussed on the common prescription format for inward patients and pilot testing. Later, Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy explained the guidelines for including high-cost medicines into the formulary list. Selection of oncology medicines for Sri Lanka using health technology assessment was discussed by Dr Nuradh Joseph, Consultant Oncologist, District General Hospital, Hambanthota. Professor Kenneth Patterson, Specialist Physician and former Chair of the Scottish Medicines Consortium, UK explained about the Health Technology Assessment.









## **SLACPT MCQ Course**

MCQ course targetting the MD selection examinations was successfully held on 24th and 31st of August 2024 with the participation of about 80 doctors.

Following SLACPT members contributed to the course.

- Professor Channa Ranasinha
- Dr Sujeevani Kurukulasuriya
- Professor Priyanga Ranasinghe
- Professor Pradeep Jayawardhana
- Professor Anuradha Dassanayake
- Dr Thilanka Seneviratne
- Dr Vipula Bataduwaarachchi
- Dr Chiranthi Liyanage

## Webinar on Guidelines and Monitoring on Rational Use of Tenecteplase

Webinar on Guidelines and Monitoring on Rational Use of Tenecteplase was held on 23rd August 2024 in collaboration with Sri Lanka College of Cardiology and Association of Sri Lankan Neurologists. The resource personnel were Dr Disna Amaratunga, Consultant Cardiologist, and Secretary, Sri Lanka College of Cardiology and Dr Kishara Gooneratne, Consultant Neurologist, Senior Lecturer in Medicine, University of Moratuwa. The webinar was moderated by Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy, President, SLACPT. The webinar provided valuable insights into the rational use of tenecteplase, emphasizing its role in the management of myocardial infarction and stroke, while also addressing best practices for monitoring its use.

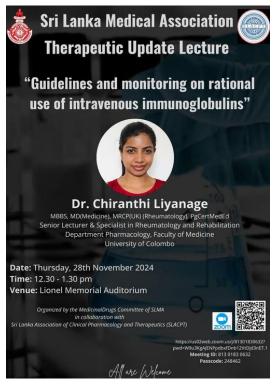


## Therapeutic Update on Guidelines: "Rational Use of Albumin"

Therapeutic update on guidelines: "Rational Use of Albumin" was held on 4th October 2024 at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium organized by the Medicinal Drugs Committee of Sri Lanka Medical Association in collaboration with SLACPT. Professor Chamila Mettananda, Professor in Pharmacology, University of Kelaniya contributed as the resource person and it was moderated by Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy, President, SLACPT.



# Therapeutic Update on Guidelines and Monitoring on Rational Use of Intravenous Immunoglobulins



Therapeutic update on guidelines and monitoring on rational use of intravenous immunoglobulins was held on 28th November 2024 at the Lionel Memorial Auditorium organized by the Medicinal Drugs Committee of Sri Lanka Medical Association in collaboration with SLACPT. The lecture was presented by Dr Chiranthi Liyanage, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacology, University of Colombo and was moderated by Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy, President, SLACPT.

### **Wall of Fame**

Professor Priyadarshani Galappatthy delivered the prestigious Professor NDW Lionel Memorial Oration at the 137th International Medical Congress of Sri Lanka Medical Association on 16th August 2024. The oration was on the topic "Availability, affordability, and indicators of medicines use in Sri Lanka: Status prior to the crisis and an analysis to address the challenges".





Professor Chandani Wanigatunge delivered the prestigious Dr EV Peiris Memorial Oration at the 57th Anniversary Annual Academic Sessions of the Ceylon College of Physicians on 21st September 2024. The oration was on the topic "A kaleidoscope of antibiotic use in Sri Lanka: Are we doing it right?".

Dr Sujeevani Kurukulasooriya was appointed as the president of the College of Specialists in Rheumatology and Rehabilitation, Sri Lanka for the year 2025.



#### Write to Us!

SLACPT welcomes suggestions from readers towards improving the image of the Association and the newsletter. Please send your suggestions to:

Email: office@slacpt.lk