

## The Colombo Medical Congress 2022

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The Colombo Medical Congress (CMC) 2022 is an international annual event of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo jointly organized by the Faculty and the Colombo Medical School Alumni Association (CoMSAA). This will be held from 18<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at the University of Colombo, Faculty of Medicine (UCFM) Tower with the option for online participation. It would include a vast array of pre-congress and post-congress workshops, symposia and meetings and a technical session spanning over three full days. The very first Colombo Medical Congress organized to mark the 150-year anniversary celebrations of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo successfully concluded in February 2020 on the verge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Having had the CMC 2021 as a virtual congress during the pandemic, we are proud to organize the third consecutive CMC to ensure the successful continuation of the Faculty's tradition of holding the Congress annually.

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The theme of this year's Congress was chosen very carefully, to represent major challenges that our nation is facing right now and the need for academia to realign itself to serve the nation in this hour of need. Every effort was taken to make maximum use of available resources, provide widest possible platform for our resource persons and audience to interact and innovate, and act with responsibility towards our national economy and shared environment. This has been an extensive operation that had to be meticulously planned over many months, with a central organizing committee and several satellite committees. The organizing committees consisted of the Faculty's academics, non-academic staff, students and alumni. All members worked with commendable levels of commitment and dedication to put together the event.

This supplement includes the original research carried out by staff and students of the Faculty and others including members of the CoMSAA in the form of two invited orations and many conference papers approved by the editorial committee that reviewed the abstracts. This supplement contains summaries of the two orations and the abstracts of 40 oral and 24 poster presentations under the open category and the abstracts of 13 oral and 11 poster presentations under the student category.



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The congress will be inaugurated on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 with Dr. Alaka Singh, the Country Representative of the World Health Organisation to Sri Lanka, as the Chief Guest. The Keynote Address of the Congress will be delivered by Dr. Anila Dias Bandaranaike, former Assistant Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, who will speak on a timely topic for the nation, ‘An opportunity for self-criticism and positive change’, which will mark the beginning of the technical sessions of the Congress. The two orations of the Congress will be delivered by two internationally renowned clinician-scientists of the country, Professor Prasad Katulanda and Professor Janaka de Silva. The technical sessions of this year’s Congress will consist of six plenaries, 27 symposia, nine free paper sessions, and three student sessions and are arranged in three parallel tracks. Overall, there are 33 international speakers and 62 local speakers. Furthermore, there are eight workshops covering a diversity of topics, of which six are pre-congress and two are post-congress. The congress will be held at the UCFM Tower, the new high-rise building of the Faculty.

One of the special features of this Congress is that the programme was developed around the responses we received to a call for expressions of interest from the Faculty and its alumni to conduct sessions. The response was overwhelming. All the activities of the congress are aligned to the broader theme of the congress with sustainable plans. We believe that this will enable the Congress to truly become a portrayal of the academic activities of our Faculty: our academics, non-academics, students, alumni and their collaborators. It is a great opportunity to share with the community at large both locally and internationally what we do, start new collaborations and open new vistas.

This congress also marks the inauguration of the first-ever Planetary Health Hackathon themed ‘Rescue Mission: Planet Earth’, targeting development of future leaders and experts in this area amongst the university students. The Department of Medical Humanities in collaboration with the wider academic community has organized several events to promote humanities, viz. art, sculpture and photography exhibitions, and musical and dance items. The congress will also see the launch of the Colombo Medical Orchestra and Colombo Medical Choir. Parallel to these activities MedCinema screening will be organized by the Film Club of Faculty and History Walks by the Colombo Clinical Society. The Colombo Medical Banquet will be held on the roof top of the UCFM Tower which offers a panoramic view of the Colombo City on Saturday evening bring the congress to an end.

Pre- and post-congress activities include a workshop on ‘Stakeholder consultation on modernizing the regulation of education, training and professional practice of health care professionals in Sri Lanka’, organized by the Ceylon Medical College Council, an academic mentoring workshop organized by the Academic Mentoring Programme UCFM, a workshop on ‘Enhancing the quality of health research with Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)’ organized by the Institute for Research & Development in Health & Social Care, Sri Lanka, a workshop on ‘Ethics review of medical research’ organized by the Ethics Review Committee, UCFM and a workshop on ‘Effective research communication: beyond the basics’ organized by the Research Promotion and Facilitation Centre, UCFM. There are two post congress events. The first one is a satellite meeting on ‘Digital Health Sri Lanka 2022’ organized by the UCFM Centre for Digital Health in

collaboration with the Sri Lanka College of Medical Informatics, the Health Informatics Society of Sri Lanka, the Commonwealth Centre for Digital Health, the European Connected Health Alliance, and the Ministry of Health. The second one is a meditation day organized by the Meditation Research Group.

The congress promises to be a wonderful opportunity for developing and strengthening links among the vast network of students, staff and alumni. We hope that the programme and activities of the congress will bring us closer to developing sustainable and affordable healthcare, a pressing need of our times.