



**Volume 1, Issue 1
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RPFC News & Views

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE RESEARCH PROMOTION AND FACILITATION CENTER
OF THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE COLOMBO

Message from the Dean- Professor Jennifer Perera



First and foremost, I sincerely thank the editor and the committee of the Research Promotion and Facilitation Center for developing this newsletter. The RPFC is fulfilling a very important need of the Faculty by providing training and support for research. The research support activities are highly appreciated by the academics as well as the postgraduate students of the Faculty. RPFC commenced the first formalized writing support programme in Sri Lanka and was able to support other higher education institutions to implement the programme. The training workshops and the instrument lending facility are also very useful, especially to the young researchers of the Faculty. RPFC also monitors the research support needs of the Faculty while supporting research collaborations and technology transfer. I congratulate the director and the team of RPFC for continuing and expanding the research promotion and facilitation services for the benefit of the researchers in Sri Lanka. I wish the RPFC all the very best in all future deliberations and pledge my fullest support for all its activities.

Prof. Jennifer Perera

Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo

Message from Director RPFC- Dr. Dilshani Dissanayake

It gives me great pleasure to send this message to our first newsletter. I very much appreciate and congratulate the hardwork put in by Dr. Sameera Gunewardena, editor of the newsletter for the job well done!

RPFC commenced its activities in 2013 under the guidance of the former Dean, Prof. Rohan Jayasekara and was funded by the Higher Education for the Twenty first Century (HETC) World Bank grant coordinated by the HETC grants committee of the Faculty, chaired by Prof. Nadira Karunaweera. I was appointed as the lead coordinator of the provision of research support activity of the HETC grant in 2012. The research support arm of the HETC grant paved the way to the commencement of the activities of RPFC in 2013. Since then RPFC expanded its objectives and human resources and was established as an administrative unit in 2017 under the guidance of the current Dean, Prof. Jennifer Perera. RPFC is guided by an eminent group of advisors and the activities are coordinated by an excellent group of dedicated activity coordinators. RPFC aspires to do its best to promote and facilitate a high quality positive research culture not only in the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo but also in the higher education institutions and all collaborating researchers in the country.



Dilshani Dissanayake

Director - RPFC

Introducing RPFC

Dr. Dilshani Dissnayake, MBBS, PhD(UK)

Research promotion facilitation centre (RPFC) in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo was established in 2013, with funding provided via the World Bank grant – Higher Education for Twenty first Century (HETC). The initial objective was to promote and support research activities in the Faculty including the PhD projects funded by the HETC grant. Since 2013, RPFC has contributed significantly to uplift and promote a positive research culture in the Faculty and also has established research networks with local and international research institutes.



The RPFC has expanded since then and recently was formalized as an administrative unit with spacious infrastructure and support provided by the Faculty. The current unit has several objectives provided via seven main arms with each arm coordinated by an activity coordinator and supervised and guided by an advisor.

Following are the current functions of the RPFC categorized under each activity.

1. Conducting research training programmes

- Conducting research training workshops to post-graduate students, academic staff and supervisors of the Faculty of Medicine
- Conducting research training workshops to academic staff and research supervisors of the networking faculties and institutes
- RPFC will commence a certificate course in postgraduate research from 2018

2. Conducting Research writing support programme (RWSP)

- Conducting the RWSP for the post-graduate students, academic staff and supervisors of the Faculty of Medicine
- Provision of editorial support to the authors mentored via the RWSP
- Provision of access to the RWSP to academic staff and research supervisors of the networking faculties and institutes
- Support networking faculties and institutions to initiate and conduct RWSPs



3. Facilitating recruitment of students, progress review and mentoring for post-graduate research students and supervisors in the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo

- Facilitate recruitment of post-graduate students

- Regular progress review of the post-graduate research projects (especially the ones facilitated by the RPFC) by the advisory committee.
- Provision of counseling and problem solving sessions with experts in the area of research for both research students and supervisors.
- Provision of guidance and support to the academic staff, in all the areas related to research
- Regular assessments/surveys of research support needs of the post-graduate students and supervisors
- Improving generic skills of the researchers through regular journal clubs.



4. Provision of core research facilities for research

- Carrying out a research instrument lending service
- Providing video conferencing and library facilities
- Supporting establishment of research laboratories and collaboration between laboratories for research

5. Providing platforms to publicize research in the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo

- Conducting research forums to publicize research done in different departments
- Support organising committee of the annual research symposium of the Faculty
- Develop Audio-visual and other materials to publicize research

6. Facilitating research collaborations with national and international research institutions, industry and policy makers



- Supporting research collaborations, establish MOUs and monitor progress of the collaborations of the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo
- Facilitating the process of reviewing and approval of research contracts
- Facilitating and supporting meetings and processes with policy makers

7. Facilitation of technology transfer

- Technology Transfer Office (TTO) of the RPFC is expected to be the faculty contact point of the IP Hub project of the National Intellectual Property Office (NIPO).
- Support intellectual property issues and patent filing
- Promote commercialization of research

Furthermore, RPFC provides administrative, infrastructure and clerical support to the research and higher degrees committee (RHDC) and the research committee (RC) of the Faculty aligning with the master plan of the faculty. RPFC has recently established a clinical trials committee (CTC) chaired by Prof. Priyadharshani Galappaththy of the Department of Pharmacology to support clinical trials of the Faculty.

Activity Coordinators and Advisors of RPFC

Head of the advisory committee - Prof. Nadira Karunaweera

Activity	Coordinator	Advisor
Conducting research training programmes	Dr. Shreenika Weliange	Prof. Nadira Karunaweera
Conducting the research writing support programme(RWSP)	Dr. Sharmila Jayasena	Prof. Nadira Karunaweera
Facilitating post-graduate research	Dr. Asela Olupeliyawa,	Dr. Dilshani Dissanayake
Supporting the provision of core-facilities for research-	Dr. Sisira Pathirana	Prof. Sumedha Wijeratne
Facilitating research collaborations with national and international research institutions and industry	Dr. Tharanga Thoradeniya	Prof. Saroj Jayasinghe
Provision of platforms to publicize research of the faculty	Dr. Sameera Gunawardena	Prof. Saroj Jayasinghe
Technology Transfer Office	Dr. T Kalum Wettasinghe	Prof. Vajira Dissanayake

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**RPFC now provides research equipment at nominal rates for students/researchers of the Faculty of Medicine Colombo!**



GPS devices  
Weighing scales  
Stadiometers  
and many more....



*Items are available at the RPFC office and can be obtained by contacting Dr. Sisira Pathirana of the Department of Parasitology -sisira@parasit.cmb.ac.lk*

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## Research Writing Support Program (RWSP)

Dr. Sharmila Jayasena BSc, PhD

The RPFC has commenced the first formalized research writing support programme in the country with the support from INASP, UK through the AuthorAID programme. The research writing support activities commenced as training workshops in 2013 and expanded into the RWSP which consists of training workshops, an online course and writing clubs. Writing support is provided by a dedicated group of mentors- current and retired members of the Faculty of medicine, to the mentees to write and publish their research articles in peer-reviewed high quality indexed journals. The programme runs once year for three to four months. The fourth RWSP of the RPFC commenced in December 2017 and concluded in April 2018. Next RWSP will commence in January 2018.

The centre is providing expertise and support to the networking partners to initiate writing support programmes in their institutions. Peradeniya and Ragama Medical Faculties successfully initiated the writing support programmes and recently RPFC supported the National Science Foundation to commence their writing support activity.

The Author Aid Global Partners meeting was successfully held in the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo, Sri Lanka in December 2017, hosted by the RPFC and was attended by representatives from networking partners of RWSP, international researchers and organisations contributing to Author AID and also by the partners from developing countries that were or are currently funded by INASP to develop programs that promote research writing. The RWSP was highly commended by the participants and some international participants planned to commence RWSPs similar to that of RPFC in their institutions.



Participants of the AuthorAID global partners meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and the RPFC members

Some of the dedicated mentors and successful mentees (i.e who published two papers or more) were felicitated at the last writing club. The group posed for a photo with Prof. Barbara Gastel- RWSP



Expert from AuthorAID, Prof. Nadira Karunaweera, Head of the advisory committee, RPFC and the RWSP group. Our successful mentees are Dhanajaya Perera, Udeshika Kariyawasam, Dhanusha Thambavita, Dr. Romain Perera, Dr. S Sujendran, Rajika Dewasurendra, Nuwani Manamperi and U. Pasindu Fernando. Our dedicated mentors are Prof. Harsha Seneviratne, Dr. BJC Perera, Prof AH

Sherifdeen, Prof Shalini Sri Ranganathan, Dr. Nilakshi Samaranyake, Dr. Gominda Ponnampereuma and Dr. Sisira Pathirana (some of who were absent for the photo).

## Upcoming Research Related Activities in 2018

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 12-14th                  | <b>International Conference of Medical Humanities</b><br><i>The first ever conference on Medical Humanities in Sri Lanka-Please see the flyer on page 8</i>                                        |
| July 26 <sup>th</sup>         | <b>Research and Innovation Workshop organised by the RPFC at the SLMA sessions 2018</b><br><i>Please see the programme below</i>                                                                   |
| September 2018 – January 2019 | <b>Certificate course in postgraduate research</b><br><i>Further details on Page 7</i>                                                                                                             |
| November 18 <sup>th</sup>     | <b>Annual Research Symposium of the University of Colombo</b><br><i>The coinciding Annual Research Symposium of the Faculty of Medicine will be held shortly afterwards - Date to be announced</i> |

### RPFC workshop on Research and Innovation

26<sup>th</sup> July 2018, SLMA Conference, Hotel Galadari, Colombo

| TIME               | TOPIC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | RESOURCE PERSONS                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8.00 am -8.45 am   | Registration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 8.45 am -9.00 am   | Welcome<br>Introduction to the RPFC, Workshop and Resource Persons                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Dr. Dilshani Dissanayake                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 9.00am -9.45am     | Writing a research proposal and obtaining grants;<br>How to be innovative in the process- <b>panel discussion</b><br><i>Overall introduction on structure of a proposal, research designs and grant applications</i>                                                  | Prof. Nadira Karunaweera<br>Prof. Vajira Dissanayake                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 9.45am – 10.45am   | <b>Group activity</b> on research methodology and filling grant applications                                                                                                                                                                                          | Dr. Sisira Pathirana (main coordinator and facilitator of the session)<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Dr. Shreenika Weliange,</li><li>▪ Dr. Asela Olupeliyawa</li><li>▪ Dr. Sameera Gunawardena</li></ul> |
| 10.45 am - 11.00am | Tea                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 11.00am – 11.45am  | Writing and publishing research articles- tips and pitfalls; Introduction to RWSP<br><b>Panel discussion</b><br><i>Overall introduction on structure of a paper, issues in selecting a journal (impact factor ,predatory ones etc.), plagiarism, introducing RWSP</i> | Dr. Sharmila Jayasena (main coordinator and facilitator of the session)<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Dr. Dilshani Dissanayake</li><li>▪ Dr. Shreenika Weliange</li></ul>                                |
| 11.45am- 12.30pm   | Research in to practice – beyond publications; innovations and related issues- intellectual property<br><b>Panel discussion</b>                                                                                                                                       | Dr. Kalum Wettasinghe(main coordinator and facilitator of the session)<br><i>Resource persons;</i><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Prof. Vajira Dissanayake</li></ul>                                      |
| 12.30pm -1.pm      | <b>Group activity/</b> Q and A and sum up by the TTO                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Prof. Vajira Dissanayake<br>Dr. Kalum Wettasinghe                                                                                                                                                                     |

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## ***Certificate Course in Postgraduate Research***

Dr. Shreenika Welinge, MBBS, Msc, MD

The research training arm of the RPFC will commence a certificate course for post-graduate researchers in the country to equip them with the research skills required to carry out a high quality post-graduate research project. The course consists of four modules. Each module is of one-month duration with two full days of face to face learning at the beginning of the module followed by online tutor guided teaching learning activities.

Areas covered by each module are given below.

### **MODULE 1- Preparing for higher degree research and ethics**

- Introduction to postgraduate research
- Selecting a research area and planning a research a project
- Rules and regulations of Research and Higher Degrees Committees
- Selection of supervisors
- Managing supervisor – trainee relationships
- Introduction to collaborative research
- Library skills – introduction to literature search, Facilities available in the library for researchers
- General skills – interpersonal relationships, teamwork, communication, Information Technology
- Overview of ethics in research – human and animal
- Application for ethical approval from a recognized Ethics committee

### **MODULE 2 - Research methods and Data Analysis**

- Introduction to research designs
- Overview of epidemiological study designs
- Introduction to laboratory studies
- Overview of genetics research
- Introduction to clinical trials
- Overview of statistical analysis
- Overview of statistics for assessing association and risks
- Introduction to methods of qualitative data analysis

### **MODULE 3 – Writing research proposals and applying for funds**

- Writing a research proposal
- Managing references
- Reviewing research proposals
- Applying for local and international grants and scholarships
- Grant management: finances and reporting
- Financial regulations in handling grants and scholarships

## MODULE 4 – Publication of research and examinations

- Introduction to scientific writing
- Writing an abstract
- Preparing for oral/ poster presentations
- Writing original research articles and reviews
- Selecting a Journal for publication
- Authorship, copyright and plagiarism
- Publication of a research article in a Journal
- Critical review of a research article
- Writing a research report /thesis
- Preparing for post-graduate research examinations

Details of the method of application and further details of the course will be published in media and also will be emailed to the higher education institutions and professional bodies soon.

## *Latest Issue of the Ceylon Journal of Medical Science – the official scientific journal of the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo*

### **Editorial**

Sri Lanka Journals Online: 10 years of success – *Jithangi Wanigasinghe*

### **Invited Review**

The human microbiome: Role in health and disease and its potential applications – *Jennifer Perera*

### **Letters to the Editor, Perspectives and Points of View**

Challenges in producing compassionate health workers - *Anuruddha M. Abeygunasekera*

### **Original Articles**

- Service quality of school canteens: a case study from the Western Province, Sri Lanka - *M. C. Weerasinghe, Samanthi Bandara, M. Sanoon*
- Validation of a flame photometric method for serum lithium estimation - *U. Mannapperuma, C. M. Peiris, D. Thambavita, P. Galappatthy, C. D. Pathirana, A. Lionel, R. L. Jayakody*
- Dry cleaning industry in the city of Colombo, Sri Lanka: a preliminary study of chemicals used and possible health effects –*Kantha Nirmali Lankatilake, Dellabada Batawalage Dulani Samaranyake, Helani Sineka Ranasooriya*
- Associated factors of electrical injuries and knowledge on their prevention and first aid management among Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) field level technical workers in Colombo municipal area - *K. A. P. Kurupparachchi, P. G. K. M. Kumarawansa, K. A. R. L. Kuruppu, Laboshan Kaliyugavarathan, Dulani Samaranyake*
- Knowledge and attitudes about the 'green car' concept among officers of a bank in Colombo district - *E. N. O. B. Silva, L. A. N. Silva, L. H. P. M. Silva, S. M. J. Arul, Gominda Ponnampereuma*
- The level of happiness among garment factory employees and factors affecting it, in two selected garment factories - *L. P. H. Kodithuwakku, C. N. Kodithuwakku, S. Kirushanth, W. Khandu, Thashi Chang*
- A vanishing callosal lesion on brain imaging in a patient with meningoencephalitis– *Thashi Chang, Radika Karunaratne, Chandima De Mel*

Articles are accessible at <https://cjms.sljol.info/>

## Ceylon Journal of Medical Science







# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MEDICAL HUMANITIES 2018

## ORGANIZED BY

The Department of Medical Humanities,  
Faculty of Medicine,  
University of Colombo

## VENUE :

Faculty of Medicine, Kynsey Road, Colombo 8.

## DATES :

12-14 July 2018

## LEARNING TO BE MORE HUMANE:

The Role of Medical Humanities

INAUGURATION 12 July 2018 8.30-10.30 am (by invitation)

ACADEMIC SESSIONS

### 12 July 2018

10.30 am Panel Discussion - Humaneness: Towards a definition

01.00 pm Symposium - Ethics, philosophy and religion to make us more humane

03.45 pm Abstracts- Oral presentations

### 13 July 2018

08.30 am Panel Discussion - Building capacity in Medical Humanities

10.00 am Symposium - Does self-awareness improve humaneness?

11.30 am Symposium - Communication and professionalism

02.00 pm Symposium - Humaneness in clinical practice

04.15 pm Abstracts - Oral presentations

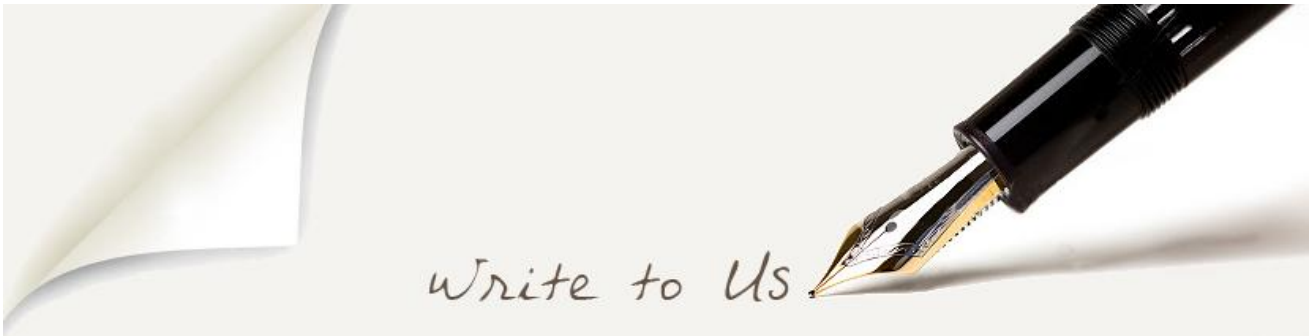
### 14 July 2018

8.00 am to 1.30 pm Workshop: The Arts in Health Professional Education

Registration: Local Rs 500 per day, Overseas US\$ 100

Resource persons from Sri Lanka, Norway, USA, Malaysia and India

For further details visit <http://www.med.cmb.ac.lk>



***You too can contribute to the RPFC newsletter!***

***If you want to share your research projects or promote any research activity within the faculty of medicine through our newsletter, you are welcome to write to us!***

***Please contact the editor Dr. Sameera A Gunawardena on [sameera@fortox.cmb.ac.lk](mailto:sameera@fortox.cmb.ac.lk)***

***We look forward to hearing from you!***