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### **From the President**

As the President, I welcome you to our online community! This is our fourth Newsletter since the inception of this mode of sharing Association's news.

One of my greatest joys is helping to foster remarkable partnerships among alumni, current students and staff at the faculty, donors, and our community. Our goal is to preserve a mutually beneficial, enduring relationship among alumni and with the medical faculty.

This is a fitting venue to showcase some of these inspiring partnerships and how they ultimately effect medical education and social integration. I take this opportunity to update you with PeMSAA-UK's activities since February 2021.

- We hosted a successful and exciting Spring Webinar on "Emerging Technologies in the Post COVID Healthcare".
- PeMSAA-UK committee members canvassed their local MPs and on behalf of PeMSAA-UK, I communicated directly with Prime Minister Hon. Boris Johnson and the Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment, Hon. Nadhim Zehavi's offices requesting urgent assistance with a supply of Oxford-Astra Zeneca vaccines to Sri Lanka as there were about 600,000 people stranded without the second dose. We received an encouraging correspondence from the Minister of State for South Asia Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon emphasizing UK's commitment on sharing a large quantity of vaccines with COVAX to support international community including Sri Lanka.
- As there was a crucial need for multiple genome sequencing Centres to enhance the COVID-19 sequencing capacity, Prof Malik Pieris and the Head of Microbiology Department Prof. Faseeha Noordeen, requested our assistance. PeMSAA-UK is proud to have initiated a fund-raising campaign towards establishing a Genome Sequencing Service at the Department. We thank Prof. Kapila Gunawardana for identifying the financier, Dr Walter Jayasinghe from LA, USA who contributed Rs. 7, 000,000.00 towards this endeavour. Prof Malik Pieris says that '*COVID-19 is not the only reason for genome sequencing capacity. It is becoming a basic need in infectious disease and biomedicine for both communicable and non-communicable diseases. So, the Faculty of Medicine Peradeniya has every reason to invest in this capacity now*'
- Following a request from the faculty Librarian Ms. Dilani Abeyrathne and Prof Channa Ratnatunga, PeMSAA-UK has collated a list of books with costing for the library. We have distributed this list among the global alumni for their contributions towards purchasing them for the library. We hope to work in collaboration with local PeMSAA in fulfilling this request.. Please contact Dr. Padma Samarawickrama ([membership@pemsaa.uk](mailto:membership@pemsaa.uk)) who is leading this project.
- PeMSAA-UK Academic Award for 2021 for Research, Audit and Quality Improvement Projects is now offered to undergraduates and postgraduates. We are receiving excellent submissions. The winners would be announced during the latter part of September 2021. We encourage early submission of projects. **Please see page 2 and visit the PeMSAA-UK website for more information.**
- **The Autumn Webinar** will be given by Prof. Tim Spector who is Professor of Genetic Epidemiology and Director of the Twins UK Registry at Kings College, London. He has published over 1000 research articles and is ranked in the top 1% of the world's most published scientists by Reuters. He held a prestigious European Research Council Senior Investigator Award in Epigenetics and is a NIHR Senior Investigator. **The details are on page 2.**

PeMSAA-UK will continue to support the alumni community and alma mater and I urge you to become an active alumnus / alumna and share in the exciting activities and opportunities this organisation has to offer.

Best wishes and stay safe.

*Krish*

**Krish T Radhakrishnan  
President – PeMSAA-UK**

## Spring Webinar Report

PeMSAA UK organized an academic webinar "Emerging technologies in the post-COVID healthcare" on 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2021. The webinar was approved by the Royal College of Physicians for 2 CPD credits. The first speaker was Dr. Mahiben Maruthau, whose parents are both alumni of the Peradeniya faculty. He discussed about '*Technologies in Post COVID-19 Healthcare*' in the form of questions of answers with moderators Krish Radhakrishnan, Swaminathan and Gayathri Wathuge. During this discussion, he highlighted how artificial Intelligence will help in many areas of health care including diagnostic services, social care, training, and education. He discussed the implications and limitations of the technology but emphasized that with the right kind of approach, the gains to the health of individuals and the healthcare services are likely to be substantial.

The second speaker was Dr. Thushan de Silva, whose parents are both Colombo alumni. He spoke on the '*Prospects & Utility for Integrating Pathogen Genomics into Healthcare: Lessons from SARS-CoV-2*'. Thusahan who was a member of the UK Genomics Consortium spoke how the use of genomics has helped to track the spread of the virus in the current pandemic. He discussed how advancement in technology is making it possible to do genomic analysis of any infection, both viral and bacterial, in a short period of time. He speculated that in few years' time, such analysis could be done at the bedside making it possible to diagnose and treat infections rapidly. About 150 delegates participated and we received excellent feedback for the event.

*Prof. Ram Swaminathan*

## 2021 PeMSAA-UK Academic Award for Research, Audits and Quality Improvement Projects

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

**Closing date for submissions extended to  
31 August 2021**

## PeMSAA Mentorship and Training

Ipswich, Oxford, Stoke, London, Plymouth, Essex, Sheffield. These are the current places where PeMSAA trainees are, to whom we are providing mentorship.

Would you like to be a mentor and help our trainees if they are in your local area?

We also have identified PeMSAA UK members as contacts for job opportunities in the UK in following specialties:

Anaesthesia, Stroke and Medicine, Neurology and Rehabilitation Medicine, Cardiology, Surgery, Ophthalmology, Orthopedics, Psychiatry, GU Medicine, Pathology, Haematology, and Paediatrics.

**Are you able to provide any placement in your respective hospitals and specialties for our trainees?  
Are you able to be the link a person for any other specialties not on this list?**

**If so, please get in touch with  
Dr. Uditha Jayatunga, Secretary PeMSAA:  
udithajayatunga@ntlworld.com**

## Autumn Webinar

### Role of Microbiome in Health & Disease

By

**Prof. Tim Spector**

Professor of Genetic Epidemiology  
Director, UK Twins Registry, King's College, London  
on

**18<sup>th</sup> September 2021  
at 10.00 hrs. BST (GMT+1)**

Approved by the  
Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians, UK  
for one CPD credit

**Please await registration details**

**PeMSAA-UK AGM on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2021  
will be at 11.45 BST (GMT + 1)**

Please visit: [www.PeMSAA.uk](http://www.PeMSAA.uk)

**All welcome but only registered members can vote**

## PeMSAA-UK Talent Unearthed!

It is well recognised that University of Peradeniya has got best university facilities not only for academic work but also to develop our talents. COVID meant that we had to do things differently and hence we had to resort to web-based events for our activities.

Last AGM was such an event and PeMSAA members contributed with their individual talents to make it a very memorable event with a combination of singing, dancing, and skits. COVID has made global village smaller as we had participations from across the globe from Australia, Sri Lanka and UK in uniquely co-ordinated singing items which would have been impossible a decade ago. We also was reminded of the residential life of Peradeniya with a beautifully composed song on Mars Hall which no doubt took our memories back to good old days. We were enthralled by a classical Bharatanatyam dance as well as a colourful ball room dance acts which was said to be meant for Russian kings. The event was not complete without humour which came from two unusual skits which certainly added flavour to the event.

Our sincere thanks go out to our PeMSAA members in UK as well as PeMSAA alumni and alumnae who participated from SL and Australia. Success of the event prompted PeMSAA - Sri Lanka to have a similar event few months later unearthing much wider PeMSAA talent!

*Dr. Uditha Jayatunga*

## PeMSAA-UK International Academic Conference 2021



**18<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

- ★ Day 1: Dr. P. Arunagiri Memorial Lecture
- ★ Evening Ball

**Make this a fun-filled "Batch Reunion" weekend!**

## Editors

Dr. PG Samarawickrama & Prof. DYD Samarawickrama