Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS)

Section A Newsletter

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This Issue

Training physiotherapists for elderly care in Sri Lanka: Bridging the skills gap to meet demographic demands

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The urgent need for geriatric training

Sri Lanka is rapidly becoming one of the most aged societies in South Asia (De Silva and De Silva, 2023). With declining fertility rates and increasing life expectancy, over 20% of the population will be aged 60 or older by 2030 (De Silva and De Silva, 2023). While this is a success of public health advancements, it presents complex health and social challenges, including the rise of non-communicable diseases, frailty, and dependency. Physiotherapists are essential to addressing these challenges—supporting mobility, fall prevention, rehabilitation, and overall well-being (Samaraweera, 2024). However, most physiotherapists in Sri Lanka receive minimal training in geriatrics, resulting in a significant skills gap that limits effective care delivery for older adults.

Physiotherapists play a crucial role in geriatric care by helping older adults maintain mobility, independence, and quality of life (Samaraweera, 2024). As people age, they commonly experience declines in muscle strength, balance, flexibility, and coordination factors which increase the risk of falls, injuries, and functional dependence. Physiotherapists assess these age-related changes and provide targeted interventions such as strength and balance training, gait retraining, pain management, and postural education (Samaraweera, 2024). These services not only reduce the likelihood of falls and hospitalizations but also enable older adults to carry out daily activities more safely and confidently, promoting autonomy and reducing the burden on caregivers.

In addition to physical rehabilitation, physiotherapists contribute to the management of chronic conditions such as osteoarthritis, stroke, Parkinson's disease, and post-fracture recovery conditions that are prevalent in older populations (Reddy et al., 2024). Through individualized care plans and patient education, physiotherapists support older adults in coping with limitations, managing symptoms, and improving functional capacity. They also play a key role in multidisciplinary geriatric teams, collaborating with doctors, nurses, and occupational therapists to deliver holistic, person-centered care (Keijsers et al., 2016). By addressing both physical and psychosocial aspects of aging, physiotherapists are essential to promoting healthy, active aging and reducing long-term healthcare costs.

Reforming undergraduate education

To address the growing needs of an aging population, undergraduate training for physiotherapists and allied health professionals in Sri Lanka requires urgent reform. Traditional curricula often lack geriatric-specific content and offer limited clinical exposure to elderly care. The CAPAGE project, launched in 2024 under the EU's Erasmus+ program, aims to fill this gap through a three-year collaboration between six Sri Lankan and four European universities.

CAPAGE has successfully introduced dedicated modules on geriatric care, covering key areas such as physiological aging, frailty, fall prevention, and interdisciplinary approaches. By integrating these topics into physiotherapy and nursing programs, the project ensures that future healthcare professionals are well-equipped with the necessary skills and competencies to assess, manage, and rehabilitate older adults effectively.

Building core competences for physiotherapists and nurses working with older adults

Health professionals, especially physiotherapists and nurses, need specialized skills in geriatric care, along with a commitment to continuous learning and professional growth. To support this, a core competency framework was developed through the CAPAGE project to strengthen the standards and capabilities of those involved in elderly care in Sri Lanka. This framework serves as a practical guide for clinicians, educators, and students, aiming to promote active, healthy aging. It also offers a reference for public and private healthcare systems to set and maintain quality standards in geriatric care services.

The framework was shaped by a thorough needs analysis, ensuring its relevance to the local context and addressing the specific healthcare needs of older adults. It identifies seven key competency roles for physiotherapists and nurses: leader/expert (delivering quality care), communicator (patient-centred communication), collaborator (teamwork and shared decisions), organizer (coordinating care), health and welfare advocate (promoting well-being), scholar (evidence-based practice and lifelong learning), and professional (ethical, holistic care). These competencies form a foundation for improving the quality and consistency of geriatric services across the country.

Geriatric assessment laboratories: Bridging theory and practice

In addition to curriculum reform, the CAPAGE project has established Geriatric Assessment Laboratories (GALs) at six Sri Lankan universities. These labs are equipped with advanced tools such as balance platforms, gait analysers, and cognitive screening devices, offering students practical, hands-on experience. This exposure builds clinical confidence and supports simulation-based learning aligned with global standards. The GALs also foster interdisciplinary education, allowing physiotherapy, nursing, medical, and occupational therapy students to train together in team-based geriatric care. This collaborative model strengthens communication and coordination skills vital for long-term and community-based elderly care. European partners—FH JOANNEUM (Austria), JAMK University (Finland), Santa Maria Health School (Portugal), and the University of A Coruña (Spain)—have guided curriculum development and lab setup. Faculty training abroad has further enabled the adaptation of international best practices to Sri Lanka's context.

Building momentum through an international geriatric conference

In February 2025, the Department of Allied Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, hosted the International Conference on Frailty and Geriatric Assessments to foster global collaboration and digital skills under the theme "Promoting Healthy Aging through Holistic Approaches and Innovations." The event welcomed over 250 participants. While progress has been made, ongoing investment is crucial to sustain laboratory infrastructure and continue faculty development. Educational reforms must also extend to clinical settings like hospitals and elder care facilities to maximize CAPAGE's impact. To strengthen geriatric care, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs in dementia care, fall prevention, and chronic disease management are essential. Regulatory bodies are encouraged to embed geriatric competencies into licensure requirements, and integrating physiotherapists into community health teams is vital for improving rural, age-sensitive care. The benefits of these reforms are profound. Geriatric-trained physiotherapists can reduce hospitalizations, promote functional independence, and improve the quality of life for older adults (Palekar and Palekar, 2025). Their role in caregiver education and community outreach also alleviates strain on families and formal institutions. This aligns with the WHO's Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) and positions Sri Lanka to lead in culturally appropriate, community-based elderly care models (World Health Organization, 2020). CAPAGE has sparked academic interest in geriatric care among students, with increasing involvement in research on frailty, fall prevention, and age-friendly environments. This cultural shift within health education reflects a growing commitment to aging with dignity. Through exposure to advanced training labs, international collaboration, and interdisciplinary learning, students and faculty are becoming champions for elderly well-being.

Specialized elderly care physiotherapy service from the Faculty of Medicine

The Elderly Care Physiotherapy Clinic, operated by the Centre for Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation of the Department of Allied Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, is dedicated to promoting functional independence and quality of

life among older adults. This specialized clinic provides comprehensive physiotherapy assessments and individualized treatment plans addressing age-related concerns such as balance impairments, falls, joint pain, mobility limitations, and chronic conditions like arthritis and stroke. With a focus on evidence-based practice and compassionate care, the clinic serves as both a community resource and a clinical training site for undergraduate students, fostering hands-on learning in geriatric rehabilitation within a multidisciplinary framework.

(Six Geriatric Assessment laboratories established in partner Sri Lankan universities)

Conclusion: A model for system-wide transformation

The CAPAGE project exemplifies how collaborative curriculum reform, hands-on learning environments, and global-local partnerships can transform health professional education. These efforts contribute not only to better care outcomes for Sri Lanka's elderly but also to a national ethos that values and respects aging. Moving forward, sustaining the momentum through national policy recognition, expanded CPD, and integration across all health curricula will be key to lasting impact. Training physiotherapists in geriatrics is not just an educational imperative—it is a societal responsibility and a strategic investment in the future.

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Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare: Balancing Innovation, Equity, and Ethics in a Transforming Landscape

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Advancing Diagnostics and Disease Prediction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer confined to experimental labs; it has steadily become part of everyday discussions in healthcare. Its applications range from improving diagnostic precision and predictive modelling to easing the administrative and clinical workload that often overwhelms health systems. These developments are unfolding in response to real-world pressures: longer life expectancy, staff shortages, escalating costs, and the unprecedented flow of digital health data. Of course, the advantages of AI cannot be divorced from parallel debates on ethics, fairness, and governance. What follows is an attempt to weigh these opportunities against the responsibilities they create.

Much of the visible progress has been in diagnosis and disease prediction. Studies show that machine learning (ML) and deep learning (DL) models are now central to advances in medical imaging, decision support, and risk stratification (1). A notable example is the use of explainable ML applied to electrocardiogram (ECG) data, which has shown promising results in research on the detection of liver disease. These models highlight clinically meaningful features, prolonged QTc intervals, for instance that clinicians already recognize as significant (2). Because ECGs are inexpensive and non-invasive, their repurpose in this way could prove especially valuable in settings where costly diagnostics are simply unavailable.

Beyond diagnostic applications, AI is being trialled in areas that directly affect patients' day-to-day experiences. Embodied AI (EmAI), where robotics and multimodal large models are integrated, is being explored in surgery, rehabilitation, and even as a form of companionship for patients. Such systems are not limited to processing data; they can interact with clinicians and patients in real time, supporting procedures while also contributing to recovery and well-being (3). This represents a subtle but important shift: AI is moving from an invisible background process toward a more active presence in healthcare delivery.

Perhaps most compelling is AI's potential in rural and underserved regions. Telemedicine platforms, automated diagnostic tools, and predictive analytics already show promise in reducing geographic barriers and providing faster access to care (4). The arrival of multimodal foundation models (MFMs) and large language models (LLMs) has extended these possibilities further, particularly in triage, translation, and medical record-keeping. That said, the challenges are not trivial, poor infrastructure, patchy connectivity, and affordability remain major barriers.

At the global level, the potential of AI to democratize access to expertise is widely acknowledged. In principle, a clinician working in a small regional clinic could access decision-support systems comparable to those in major hospitals (4). Yet the risk remains that if adoption is concentrated in wealthy health systems, the technology will widen, rather than narrow, the digital divide. Ensuring fair distribution of AI is therefore essential if it is to support health equity rather than undermine it.

Ethical and Fairness Considerations

Bias continues to be one of the most troubling issues in healthcare AI. Algorithms trained on incomplete or unrepresentative datasets may disadvantage certain patient groups and reinforce existing disparities (5). Tackling this problem requires deliberate inclusion of diverse datasets and the adoption of fairness-aware methods to strengthen generalizability across populations.

Equally important is transparency. Clinicians are far more likely to trust systems when they can understand why a particular output was generated. Methods such as Shapley value interpretation, applied in ECG-based models, allow clinical reasoning to be cross-checked with model outputs (2). By contrast, black-box approaches limit understanding and may delay adoption in high-stakes settings.

AI is best conceived as a supportive partner, not a substitute for medical expertise. Teams that integrate AI insights with clinical judgment may achieve better outcomes while maintaining accountability. Still, an over-reliance on automation carries the risk of eroding professional judgment, so maintaining a balance between oversight and automation remains vital (5).

Policy, Regulation, and Governance

Harnessing AI responsibly will depend on robust policy frameworks. International health leaders emphasize the importance of improving data quality, investing in infrastructure for evaluation, facilitating secure data sharing, and creating incentives for responsible development (6). Regulation should not be static; it must allow for ongoing monitoring of AI performance in different populations and contexts. Equally, collaboration across medicine, law, data science, and ethics is essential for building durable frameworks that foster both innovation and accountability.

Conclusion

AI represents a set of powerful tools that, if carefully implemented, can enhance diagnosis, treatment, and healthcare delivery. But progress is not guaranteed. Without strong safeguards, bias reduction, equitable access, and sound governance, these same systems could entrench existing inequalities. The task ahead is to ensure that transparency, inclusivity, and accountability are built into design and policy. If achieved, AI may help create healthcare systems that are not only more efficient but also more just and patient focused.

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Yoga for Better Mental Health: A Path to Inner Resilience

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Mental health is a foundation of both individual well-being and social harmony. It directly influences our relationships, productivity and overall quality of life. As the foundation of emotional and psychological stability, prioritizing mental health is essential not just for individuals, but for communities and workplaces alike. Adult stress, especially work-related stress, has increased, resulting in burnout, absenteeism, issues with job performance, and weakened mental and physical health [1,2].

Among these growing concerns, yoga has emerged as an accessible and effective stress-reduction practice. Over the past decade, the number of people practicing yoga has increased significantly, reflecting its acceptance as a mainstream wellness tool [3, 4].

There are well-documented consequences of stress on physiological health, and yoga is as effective or better than dynamic aerobic exercise in improving health-related outcomes [3,5].

The Science Behind Yoga and Health

The conceptual background of yoga has its origins in ancient Indian philosophy. The word 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit word *'yuja'* or *'yujir'* meaning 'to unite' or 'to integrate'. Hence the meaning of word 'yoga' is 'union' or 'joining'. Originally, yoga was a way for joining a regular imperfect human being with the divine principle, or God. The goal was to unite the mind, the body and the spirit. The Patanjali Sutras stated that 'Yoga is the practice of calming the mind'[6]. The mind can be trained to relax through deep breathing and become focused while holding the breath through the practice of yoga.

This practice results in mind control. Performing yoga, not just the physical portion, but also immersing oneself on to the mental aspect of it, can support improving mental health.[6] Yoga is a blend of physical postures *(Asanas)*, breathing exercises *(Pranayama)*, and meditation techniques *(Dhyana)* that promote physical and mental health. Physical postures and breathing exercises are designed to improve physical strength, flexibility, and relaxation whereas meditation techniques are used to enhance concentration focus and reduce stress.

The eight dimensions of yoga that help individuals to be stress free, relaxed and calm comprise of *Yama* (moral codes), *Niyama* (self-discipline), *Asana* (postures), *Pranayama* (controlled breath practices promoting life force), *Pratyahara* (sensory transcendence for self-analysis), *Dharana* (concentration or attention), *Dhyana* (meditation), *Samadhi* (detached awareness of self or state of bliss).

The application of yoga as a therapeutic intervention, which began early in the twentieth century, takes advantage of the various psychophysiological benefits of component practices. Yoga's therapeutic effects for various conditions have been shown in numerous individual research, indicating that it may be used as a non-pharmaceutical strategy or as a supplement to medication therapy.

Yoga as a Transformative Tool for Mental Wellness

Yoga is a transformative healing and restoration tool for a variety of conditions, including anxiety, depression, stress management, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The World Health Organization acknowledges the relationship between spirituality, mental health, and social well-being but does not define spiritual health as a distinct component. The benefits of yoga on different neurological problems are not well reviewed, even though it is widely used as a mind-body medicine for illness prevention and health promotion and as a potential treatment modality for neurological disorders. The physical exercises *(Asanas)* may increase patient's physical flexibility, coordination, and strength, while the breathing practices and meditation may calm and focus the mind to develop greater awareness and diminish anxiety [7], and thus result in higher quality of life.

Other beneficial effects might involve a reduction of distress, blood pressure, and improvements in resilience, mood, and metabolic regulation [8].

Ayurvedic Aspect of Yoga

Yoga and Ayurveda are parallel sciences that originated in ancient India and are deeply interconnected in their approach to health and well-being. While Yoga focuses on self-realization and the integration of body, mind, and spirit through physical postures, breath control, and meditation, Ayurveda is a holistic system of medicine that emphasizes balance in the body's biological energies *(doshas) Vata, Pitta*, and *Kapha* through diet, lifestyle, herbs, and detoxification practices.

1. Dosha Balance and Mental Health

In Ayurveda, mental health is closely linked to the balance of the doshas: Vata imbalance is associated with anxiety, fear, and insomnia. Pitta imbalance may lead to anger, irritability, and perfectionism and Kapha imbalance can manifest depression, lethargy, and attachment. Yoga practices can be tailored to balance specific doshas. For example: Gentle, grounding yoga for Vata type of persons, Cooling, calming practices for Pitta type of persons and stimulating, energizing sequences for Kapha type of persons. By aligning yoga practice with one's Ayurvedic constitution *(prakriti),* individuals can better support emotional balance and mental clarity.

2. Integration of *Dinacharya* (Daily Routine)

Ayurveda emphasizes *Dinacharya*, a structured daily routine that includes yoga, *pranayama* (breathwork), meditation, oil massage (abhyanga), and proper sleep hygiene. These practices regulate the circadian rhythm, promote mental calmness, and prevent imbalances of Doshas that lead to psychological distress.

3. *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas*: The *Gunas*

Ayurveda and Yoga both recognize the three *Gunas, Sattva* (clarity, balance), *Rajas* (activity, restlessness), and Tamas (inertia, darkness) as fundamental qualities of the mind. Yoga practices aim to increase *Sattva*, bringing about mental clarity, peace, and spiritual awareness. Excess *Rajas* leads to anxiety and hyperactivity, while excess Tamas can cause depression and lethargy. A Sattvic lifestyle, which includes yoga, meditation, and a balanced diet, is recommended in Ayurveda to achieve optimal mental and emotional health.

4. Mental Health Therapies in Ayurveda and Yoga

Ayurveda utilizes herbal treatments, dietary regulation and *Panchakarma* (detox therapies) for mental health support. Yoga therapy supports these interventions by reducing stress, calming the nervous system, and improving Pranic (life force) flow through breath and movement.

5. Shared Philosophical Foundations

Both systems share a common philosophical foundation rooted in the Samkhya philosophy, which emphasizes the journey of the self *(Purusha)* through nature *(Prakriti)*, toward liberation *(moksha)*. This shared worldview supports an integrative, holistic approach to mental and spiritual health.

Mechanism of Action and Rationale for Mental Health Applications

- **The regulation of the autonomic nervous system**

Yoga is believed to exert its beneficial effects on mental health in part by modulating the autonomic nervous system, which governs the body's involuntary physiological responses to stress. Regular yoga practice has been shown to shift the balance of the autonomic nervous system by enhancing parasympathetic activity and reducing sympathetic activation. This autonomic shift results in a reduction of physiological stress markers such as elevated heart rate and blood pressure [9, 10].

Furthermore, yoga facilitates improved regulation of emotional responses and cognitive functions, including attention, memory, and executive control, which may further support mental well-being [11]. By promoting a state of autonomic balance, yoga helps prevent both hyper-reactivity and hypo-reactivity of the nervous system in response to stressors, allowing for more adaptive physiological and psychological responses [12, 13, 14]. This ability to downregulate stress responses and enhance emotional resilience highlights the therapeutic potential of yoga as a complementary intervention in managing various mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders.

- **The release of endogenous opioids and other neurochemicals**

Yoga is assumed to exert its therapeutic effects on mental health by positively altering brain neurochemistry [15]. One significant mechanism involves the release of endogenous opioids, as well as key neurochemicals such as serotonin, gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), and melatonin, all of which are closely associated with mood regulation, anxiety reduction, and emotional stability [16].

The physical postures *(Asanas)* and controlled breathing techniques *(Pranayama)* practiced in yoga have been shown to modulate the levels of these neurochemicals. For instance, yoga has been found to increase serotonin, a neurotransmitter known to improve mood and regulate the stress response [09]. In individuals with anxiety, serotonin plays a role in balancing both psychological and cardiovascular responses to stress.

Similarly, melatonin, a hormone involved in sleep regulation and emotional well-being, has been observed to increase following yoga practice, contributing to improved sleep quality and mood stabilization [10].

Importantly, low GABA levels have been consistently reported in individuals suffering from depression [11] and anxiety [12]. Research has demonstrated that yoga practices, particularly physical postures and mindful breathing, can enhance GABA activity in the brain, which is associated with reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression [13].

Together, these neurochemical changes induced by yoga may underline its ability to improve mental health, making it a promising adjunctive intervention for stress-related disorders and mood dysregulation.

- **Formation of new neural pathways**

Emerging research suggests that yoga may contribute to neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to form new neural pathways—thereby improving emotional and cognitive functioning. Yoga-based practices have been associated with structural and functional changes in key brain regions, particularly those involved in emotion regulation, interoception, empathy, and stress response [14].

Studies have shown that yoga influences resonance circuitry in the brain, leading to increased cortical thickness in areas such as the medial prefrontal cortex and insula, especially on the right side [15]. These regions are critically involved in self-awareness, emotional attunement, empathy, and the integration of logical and intuitive processing.

Importantly, yoga also appears to influence the amygdala, a key brain region involved in the processing of fear and threat. By downregulating amygdala activity, yoga can reduce emotional reactivity and support more adaptive responses to stress. In addition to these neural benefits, yoga promotes physical strength, increased flexibility, and reduced muscular tension, which collectively contribute to overall well-being and mind-body integration [16].

- **Psychological mechanisms**

In addition to physiological and neurobiological changes, yoga is believed to exert its mental health benefits through several psychological mechanisms that influence self-awareness, emotion regulation, and cognitive functioning.

One such explanation is based on the self-perception theory and the facial feedback hypothesis. These theories suggest that voluntary changes in bodily posture, facial expressions, and motor behaviours—as often observed in yoga practice—can produce corresponding psychological changes [17]. In other words, adopting a calm, open posture or controlled breathing can lead to increased feelings of calm, confidence, and well-being, reinforcing a positive emotional state.

Furthermore, yoga promotes mindfulness, present-moment awareness, and non-judgmental self-observation, all of which are key psychological skills associated with lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. These practices allowing individuals to respond more effectively to emotional challenges.

Yoga also adopts a sense of agency and self-efficacy by encouraging practitioners to take an active role in managing their physical and mental states. Over time, this leads to greater self-regulation, improved coping mechanisms, and enhanced resilience in the face of stress.

Overall, these psychological mechanisms complement the neurophysiological effects of yoga, offering a holistic framework through which yoga contributes to mental and emotional well-being.

Conclusion

Yoga, when viewed through both the lens of modern neuroscience and the traditional wisdom of Ayurveda, offers a deeply integrative approach to mental health and overall well-being. Modern research supports yoga's effectiveness in modulating the

autonomic nervous system, enhancing neurochemical balance (such as serotonin, GABA, and melatonin), and promoting neuroplasticity through structural changes in brain regions associated with emotion regulation, memory, and stress response.

Simultaneously, Ayurveda enriches the practice of yoga by offering personalized, constitution-based insights rooted in the balance of the *doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha)* and the *gunas (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas)*. Ayurvedic practices such as *dinacharya* (daily routines), sattvic diet, and herbal interventions work synergistically with yoga to restore balance in both body and mind.

Together, Yoga and Ayurveda form a complementary and holistic system—one that not only addresses the symptoms of mental distress but also nurtures resilience, emotional stability, and spiritual growth. By aligning ancient wisdom with contemporary scientific understanding, this integrated approach offers a powerful pathway to mental well-being, rooted in both tradition and evidence-based practice.

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SLAAS Section-A Introduces the Undergraduate Research Award 2025

For the first time, the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS) – Section A – is introducing the Undergraduate Research Award 2025 to recognize outstanding research by future scientists in the fields of Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, and Allied Health Sciences.

Eligible applicants include individuals or groups who have completed research projects between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2025, as part of their bachelor's degree requirements. Applications close on September 30, 2025.

Award winners will be announced during the SLAAS Annual Scientific Sessions in December 2025, where their contributions to advancing health sciences in Sri Lanka will be celebrated.

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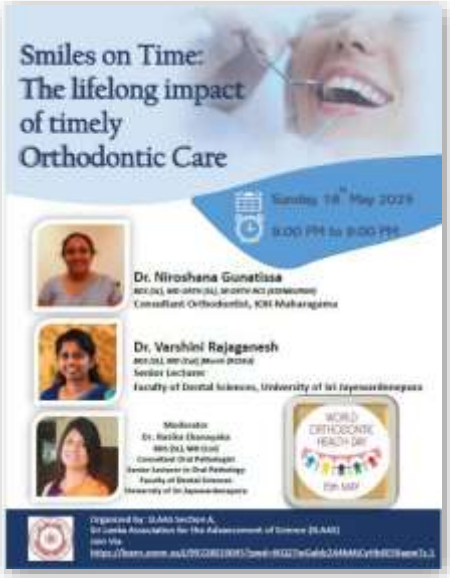
List of activities of SLAAS Section A: May to August 2025

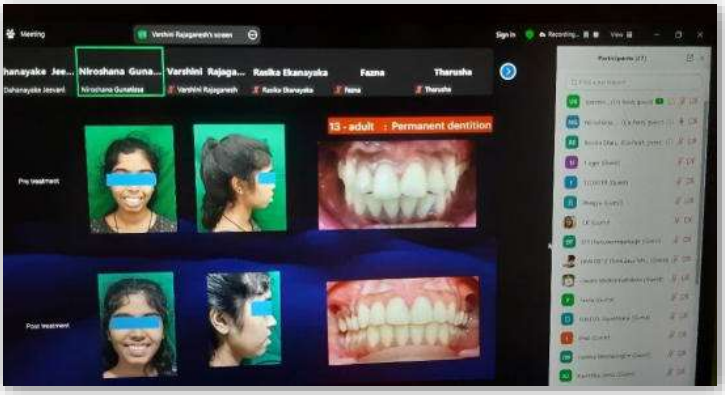
Date	Activity
May 2025	
16th May 2025	An awareness session on planning nutritionally balanced, low-cost meals was held for 35 cleaning staff of Wayamba University, Makandura, at the Nutri Hub. The program included presentations, discussions, food group activities, and demonstrations of nutritious meal and beverage preparation. **Activity coordinator: Dr. (Mrs.) A. M. Namalie Thakshila Adikari**
18th May 2025	An online webinar titled "Smiles on Time: The Lifelong Impact of Timely Orthodontic Care" was held to commemorate World Orthodontic Health Day, with Dr. Niroshana Gunatissa and Dr. Varshini Rajaganesh serving as resource persons. The event was attended by 33 participants. **Activity coordinators: Dr. Rasika Ekanayaka and Dr. Amirthavarshi Srikanthan**
29th May 2025	A webinar titled "Preventing Acute Injuries: Global Insights and Local Strategies" was held with Dr. Samitha Siritunga, Consultant Community Physician, Directorate of NCDs, Ministry of Health, as the resource person, and was attended by 40 participants. **Activity coordinators: Dr. Nimali Wijegoonewardene and Dr. Sinha de Silva**
June 2025	
6th June 2025	A webinar on "Updates on the Current Food Safety System in Sri Lanka" was held with Dr. Hemali Jayasekara, Consultant Community Physician, Food Control Administration Unit, Ministry of Health, as the resource person, and was attended by 35 participants. **Activity coordinators: Dr. Nimali Wijegoonawardene and Dr. Sinha De Silva**
16th June 2025	An awareness session on starting home gardening with medicinal plants was held at Samudra Devi Balika Vidyalaya, Ambatale on 16 June 2025 from 7.30–9.00 am, with Prof. S.D. Hapuarachchi (Faculty of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo) as the resource person. Eighty students participated, and medicinal plants were donated to establish a school medicinal garden. **Activity coordinator: Dr. J. M. Dahanayake**
25th June 2025	A quiz to assess food and nutrition literacy among students was held at Daraluwa Maha Vidyalaya, Giriulla Zone, Kurunegala District, moderated by Dr. A. M. Namalie Thakshila Adikari and Dr. Thilanka Ranathunga from the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka.Dr. (Mrs.) **Activity coordinator: Dr. (Mrs.) A. M. Namalie Thakshila Adikari**
27th June 2025	An awareness session on "Sexual Health" was held for 20 Development Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture at the Ministry premises. The session was conducted by Dr. Tharushi Muthumala, Registrar in Venereology, National STD/AIDS Control Programme. **Activity coordinators: Dr. Chamari Kannangara and Dr. Dushyanthi Jayawardane**
July 2025	
03rd July 2025	An awareness program on "HIV/AIDS" was conducted for 153 undergraduate students of the Faculty of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo, with Dr. Tharushi Muthumala, Registrar in Venereology, National STD/AIDS Control Programme, as the resource person. **Activity coordinators: Dr. J. M. Dahanayake and Dr. Dushyanthi Jayawardene**
11th July 2025	A webinar on "Updates on Chikungunya" was held with Dr. H.K.D. Kasun Prabasara, Consultant Physician, District General Hospital Hambantota, as the resource person and 44 participants in attendance. **Activity coordinator: Dr. Nalaka Kulathunge**
24th July 2025	A guest lecture on "Time Management for Undergraduates: From Chaos to Control" was held at the Faculty of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo, for 1st-year students, with Dr. Dushyanthi Jayawardane as the resource person. **Activity coordinator: Dr. J. M. Dahanayake**
August 2025	
22nd August 2025	A webinar on "Update on Dengue" was conducted with Dr. Anoja Dheerasinghe, Consultant Community Physician, Ministry of Health, as the resource person. **Activity coordinators: Dr. Nimali Wijegoonawardene and Dr. Sinha De Silva**

Events in May 2025

An awareness session on planning low-cost, nutritious meals was conducted for cleaning staff of Wayamba University, Makandura



A webinar titled “Smiles on Time: The Lifelong Impact of Timely Orthodontic Care” was held to commemorate World Orthodontic Health Day



A webinar titled “Preventing Acute Injuries: Global Insights and Local Strategies”

Events in June 2025

A webinar on “Updates on the Current Food Safety System in Sri Lanka”

An awareness session on starting home gardening with medicinal plants was held at Samudra Devi Balika Vidyalaya, Ambatale

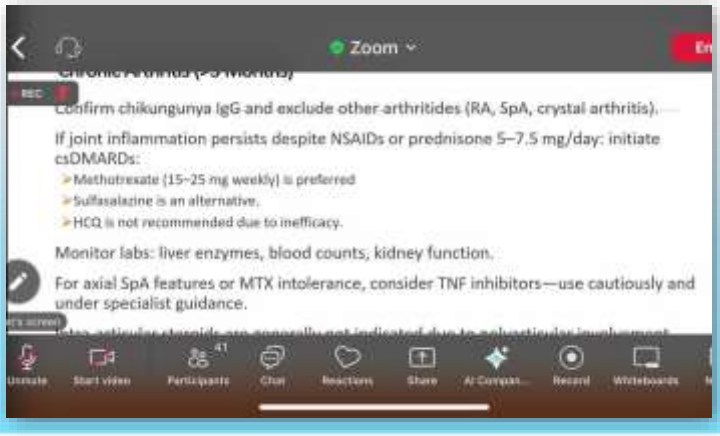
A quiz to assess food and nutrition literacy among students was held at Daraluwa Maha Vidyalaya, Giriulla Zone, Kurunegala District

An awareness session on “Sexual Health” was held for Development Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture at the Ministry premises

Events in July 2025

An awareness program on “HIV/AIDS” was conducted for undergraduate students of the Faculty of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo

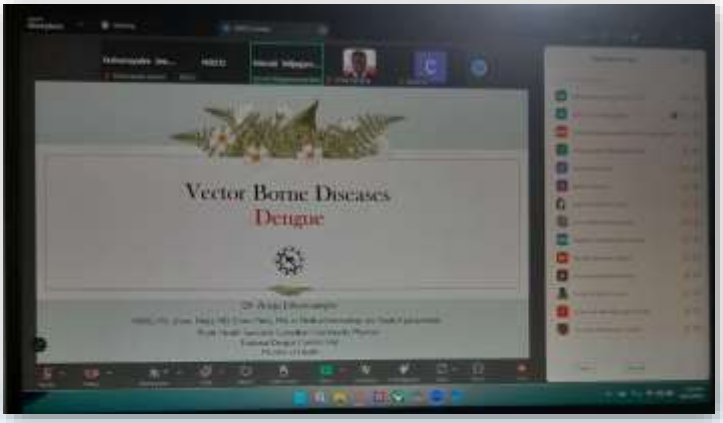
A webinar on “Updates on Chikungunya” was held for Ayurvedic medical officers



A guest lecture on “Time Management for Undergraduates: From Chaos to Control” was held at the Faculty of Indigenous Medicine, University of Colombo, for 1st-year students

Events in August 2025

A webinar on “Update on Dengue”



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