



# ASSL News

Newsletter of the Anatomical Society of Sri Lanka

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## EDITORIAL

Senior Professor B. G. Nanayakkara  
President  
ASSL

As we bask in the first few months of 2017, I recall that my objectives last year were mainly to continue the work of the previous committee and to aggressively drive to engage further with members and potential members whilst also hoisting the specialty of Anatomy nationally. This was obviously not an individual effort and I once again must express my gratitude to all those in the Council who invested their time and efforts towards this.

As a Society we have provided input/insight into the undergraduate curricula currently in practice in different Universities of Sri Lanka. The first National Symposium on Undergraduate Anatomy Curricula was held in October 2016. It was attended by members from the Universities of Colombo, Peradeniya, Sri Jayewardenepura, Kelaniya, Ruhuna, Rajarata and the Kothalawala Defense University— the long list in itself is ample evidence of our commitment and engagement of our fellow members in a common and mutually beneficial forum. I am also pleased that our colleagues from Sri Jayewardenepura have volunteered to host the follow up discussion forum of the above Symposium in 2017 which will hopefully lead to the endorsement of a common teaching and learning curriculum in the field of Anatomy.

Anatomy has been a cornerstone in medical education regardless of nation or medical school or system of teaching. Although the importance of teaching anatomy to both undergraduate and postgraduate students remains undisputed, there is currently a relevant debate concerning the methods of teaching anatomy. In the past century, cadaver dissection and lectures were its sole pedagogy worldwide. Recently the time allocated for anatomy teaching was dramatically reduced to such an extent that some have even suggested a progressive fall in the standards of knowledge in the subject both at the level of undergraduates and postgraduates. Traditional anatomy education based on topographical structural anatomy taught in lectures and gross anatomy dissection classes has been substituted by a multiple range of study modules, including problem-based learning, use of plastic models or computer-assisted learning and integration of curricula.

Balances between basic anatomy and the depth to which one must descend in order to appreciate and practice clinically has yet to be established. It is necessary for the core knowledge in anatomy to be assimilated by all undergraduates in order to practice and communicate safely. Integration of newer teaching modalities and modern technology must ensure interest and retention of anatomical knowledge and its clinical relevance. Anatomy has a promising future in postgraduate specialist training too. Detailed knowledge should be integrated into postgraduate training allowing specialists of the future to practice safely and accurately and also to provide a strong base for future clinical developments.

#### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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#### SYMPOSIUM ON CURRENT TRENDS IN UNDERGRADUATE ANATOMY CURRICULA



The symposium on "Current Trends in Undergraduate Anatomy Curricula" was successfully held on 25th November 2016 at the Board Room, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, and Galle, chaired by Senior Professor B.Ganananda Nanayakkara. There were participants representing medical faculties of the Universities of Colombo, Peradeniya, Kelaniya, Sri Jayewardenepure, Ruhuna, Rajarata and the Kothalawala Defence University. The chairperson, in his introductory speech, stressed the importance of having an open discussion of the different Anatomy curricula.



Representatives from Colombo, Peradeniya, Kelaniya, Sri Jayewardenepure, Ruhuna and the Rajarata Medical Faculties presented their curricula and the presentation session was followed by discussion on the, "advantages and disadvantages of these curricula". The discussion was chaired by Emeritus Professor Rohan W. Jayasekara. The majority explained the reasons for changing their curricula from the traditional system. Symposium was concluded with a fellowship lunch at the Light House Hotel, Galle.

This was the first national symposium, which gathered Anatomists from all over the country providing a platform to interact and discuss the current trends in undergraduate anatomy curricula, teaching of anatomy education and research in general. It is expected to catalyze the concept of having a common core curriculum in anatomy throughout the departments of anatomy in Sri Lanka.

It was decided to have a second symposium to discuss the outcome of the 1st symposium and the task of organizing was undertaken by the Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepure.



President ASYL, Senior Professor B.G. Nanayakkara addressing the gathering



Emeritus Professor Rohan W. Jayasekara chaired the discussion





## Human Genetics Unit, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo.

### The Trailblazer in Human Genetics in Sri Lanka

The Human Genetics Unit of the Faculty of Medicine University of Colombo (HGU) is the only centre in Sri Lanka dedicated to providing clinical genetic services including genetic testing and genetic counseling. In addition it also conduct undergraduate, postgraduate and CME courses in genetics for medical and allied health professionals and programmes aimed at raising genetic awareness among the public. The Unit has several active research programmes in reproductive genetics, cancer genetics, genetics of rare disorders and stem cell biology and offers degrees leading up to a PhD. The Unit plays an active role in advocacy to make genetic services available to the people of Sri Lanka and contribute to policy formation in the field of genetics in Sri Lanka. It serves as the National Referral Centre for Human Genetics in Sri Lanka, setting standards for this specialty in the country and established in 1983, is one of the oldest Clinical Genetics Centres in the Asian region and was founded by Prof. Rohan W. Jayasekara who served as its Director from 1983 to 2015. Prof. Vajira H. W. Dissanayake is now its present director.

Some of the key contributions of the Unit to the field of Genetics & Genomics in Sri Lanka are:

#### Introduction of New Technology to Sri Lanka

- Chromosomal Culture and Manual Karyotyping in 1983
- Automated Karyotyping in 2004
- Fluorescence in Situ Hybridization (FISH) in 2013
- DNA Sequencing (in collaboration with Asiri Hospitals) in 2006
- Real Time PCR (in collaboration with Asiri Hospitals) in 2006
- Clinical Bioinformatics in 2008
- Next Generation Sequencing (Iron Torrent in Collaboration with Credence Genomics) in 2013
- Next Generation Sequencing (Illumina MiSeq) in 2014
- Synthetic Biology (in collaboration with John Keells Research) in 2014
- Stem Cell Biology (in collaboration with Manipal Institute of Regenerative Medicine) in 2012

#### Research Output since 2000

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| •Papers in indexed journals                             | - 86  |
| •Scientific communications in international conferences | - 84  |
| •Scientific communications in national conferences      | - 150 |
| •Book chapters  | - 4   |

#### Research Awards

- |                                 |      |
|---------------------------------|------|
| •Conference Paper Awards        | - 9  |
| •University Research Awards     | - 1  |
| •Presidential Research Awards   | - 14 |
| •National level Research Awards | - 1  |
| •International Research Awards  | - 3  |

Contd.



#### Postgraduate Courses

- PhD - 4 graduated and 1 in training.
- MSc Clinical Genetics -11 graduated and 7 in training.
- MSc Genetic Diagnostics - 13 graduated
- MSc Regenerative Medicine - 4 graduated

#### Introduction of new specialized genetic counseling services in hospitals

- Neurogenetics (Institute of Neurology, National Hospital of Sri Lanka) – started in 2004
- Cancer Genetics (National Cancer Institute, Maharagama) – started in 2014
- Reproductive and Paediatric Genetics (De Soysa Hospital for Women) – started in 2012
- Cardiology Genetics (Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children) – started in 2012

#### International Conference

- South Asian Workshop and Symposium of the International Genetics Education Network – 2013
- International Conference on Birth Defects – 2014
- 1st International Conference on Natural Products Genomics and Drug Discovery – 2015
- 2nd international Conference on Natural Products Genomics and Drug Discovery – 2016

#### International Contributions

- The Human Genetics Unit trained a team from the National Academy of Medical Sciences in Nepal in the MSc courses in Clinical Genetics and Genetic Diagnostics. They established the first Medical Genetics Unit in Nepal in 2012.



The Human Genetics Unit Team with Prof. and Mrs. Rohan W Jayasekara in September 2016



Prof. Rohan W Jayasekara being presented with a memento in the shape of a DNA

More details about the Unit can be found on our website <http://www.hgucolombo.org>

## PUBLICATIONS & BOOKS

### Books

#### Colour Atlas of Human Anatomy: Head & Neck

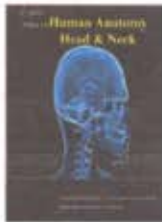
Senior Professor B. Ganananda Nanayakkara

Professor Isurani Ilayperuma,

ISBN 978-955-42477-1-0

Electronic version available at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01N050625>



## FUTURE EVENTS

- Second Anatomy Symposium will be held in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Sri Jayawardanapura.
- Inaugural issue of the Sri Lanka Anatomy Journal (SLAJ).

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE ANATOMICAL SOCIETY

To become a member, please contact Dr. M. B. Samarawickrama (0773321467), Treasurer, ASSL.

Annual membership fee - Rs. 1000.00 & Life membership fee - Rs. 10,000.00.

A special concession rate for life membership: only Rs. 9000 for current members. This offer lasts till 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2017.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Mr. Gayan Kodithuwakku, IT Unit, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna for computer assistance.



*"A man is as old as his arteries."*

—Thomas Sydenham