

CPMSL NEWSLETTER

COLLEGE OF PALLIATIVE
MEDICINE OF SRI LANKA



Volume 4, Issue 4
October, 2025



Induction of the 5th President of the College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka

The College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka ushered in a new period of leadership on 11 October 2025 with the induction of Dr. Renuka Jayatissa as its fifth President. The event, held at the Galle Face Hotel in Colombo, brought together clinicians, academics, health-sector officials, and supporters of the College's mission to strengthen palliative care across the nation.

In a dignified handover, outgoing President Dr. Ranga Perera presented the presidential medal to Dr. Jayatissa, symbolizing the continuity of leadership and reaffirming the College's commitment to strengthening palliative care services nationwide. The ceremony was further distinguished by the presence of Chief Guest Emeritus Professor Sarath Lekamwasam, former Chair of Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine, Karapitiya, and Guest of Honour Emeritus Professor Aloka Pathirana, Professor of Surgery at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, two senior academics whose longstanding contributions to medicine highlighted the multidisciplinary support for the field of palliative care.

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The theme of the College
this year is, "*Palliative
Care Without Walls:
Bringing Compassion to
Communities.*"





Presidential Address by Dr. Renuka Jayatissa, President of the College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka 2025/2026

In her inaugural address, Dr. Jayatissa offered a thoughtful reflection on the College's origins, acknowledging the foresight of its founders, and the past presidents who laid the groundwork for the discipline despite the absence of formally trained specialists at the time. Dr. Jayatissa's speech provided an insightful narrative of her personal and professional journey into palliative care. Drawing from her experiences in public health, nutrition, and clinical research, she described how exposure to multidisciplinary teaching, both locally and through international programs, deepened her appreciation of palliative care as a holistic and patient-centered discipline.

Her reflections on witnessing patients with chronic and life-limiting illnesses endure unnecessary suffering underscored the real-world implications of gaps in palliative services. She highlighted common scenarios in which individuals near the end of life receive aggressive interventions rather than the comfort, communication, and dignity they seek.

A substantial portion of her address drew attention to emerging evidence from her ongoing national study on chronic illness and ageing. Preliminary findings presented during the event revealed a high prevalence of pain, fatigue, sleep difficulties, reduced functional capacity, caregiver burden, financial strain, loneliness, and unmet informational needs among older adults living with chronic diseases. She stressed that these patterns reflect the growing vulnerability of Sri Lanka's ageing population and the urgency of integrating palliative approaches across all levels of care, from hospitals to communities and homes.

Looking ahead to her term, Dr. Jayatissa outlined the College's strategic direction under the theme "Palliative Care Without Walls: Bringing Compassion to Communities." She identified four key priority areas: improving care for frailty and ageing; supporting individuals with dementia and cognitive decline; responding to the long-term needs of those living with chronic conditions and disabilities; and strengthening capacity building for healthcare workers, caregivers, and volunteers.

She emphasized that palliative care cannot be delivered by one institution alone and called for coordinated efforts involving the Ministry of Health, universities, professional bodies, and community stakeholders.

Reminding the gathering that while ageing and illness are universal human experiences, unnecessary suffering is not, Dr. Jayatissa concluded that, "Palliative care is not only about dying well, it is about living well until the very end, with dignity, comfort, and love".

Her call to action, that Sri Lanka must ensure dignity, comfort, and compassionate support for every person facing serious illness, set a purposeful and inspiring tone for the College's future activities.



Council members of the College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka for the 2025/2026



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Dr. Kithsiri Senanayake

Dr. Chathuri Jayawardena

Dr. Ishanka Talagala

Dr. Hilary Fernando

Dr. Himali Herath

Dr. Senitha Liyanage

Dr. Ishara Premathilake

Dr. Sashiprabha Nawaratne

Dr. Priyanthi Premaratne



The Inauguration Ceremony of the 4th Annual Academic Sessions

The Inauguration Ceremony of the 4th Annual Academic Sessions 2025 of the College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka was held on 19th September 2025 at 6.00 pm at the Jubilee Ballroom of the Galle Face Hotel, Colombo, marking an important occasion in the academic calendar of the College. The ceremony brought together clinicians, academics, policymakers, and invited guests with a shared commitment to advancing palliative care in Sri Lanka.

The Chief Guest for the event was Dr. Hansaka Wijemuni (MP), Hon. Deputy Minister of Health and Mass Media, while the Guest of Honour was Prof. Vajra Dissanayake, Former Chairman of the Sri Lanka Medical Council and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, whose presence added significant professional and national stature to the occasion.

A key highlight of the evening was the College Oration 2024/2025, delivered by Dr. Ishanka Talagala, titled *"Healing hearts, honouring lives: weaving the journey of palliative care"*, which reflected the ethos of compassion, dignity, and holistic care central to palliative medicine. The programme also included the award of fellowships, recognizing excellence and commitment within the specialty, and the launching of College publications, showcasing academic growth and scholarly contribution.



Three fellowships were conferred during the event



Precongress of 4th Annual Academic Sessions of the College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka

The Pre-Congress Programme of the 4th Annual Academic Sessions 2025 of the College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka was designed as a focused academic event, that addressed key priority areas in contemporary palliative care practice. The programme included the Symposium on Clinical Aspects of Palliative Care, which explored core issues related to symptom assessment and management, including pain and other distressing symptoms commonly encountered in patients with life-limiting illnesses, with an emphasis on practical, evidence-based approaches applicable to both hospital and community settings. In parallel, the Symposium on Holistic Palliative Care highlighted the broader dimensions of care beyond physical symptoms, focusing on psychosocial and spiritual support, effective communication with patients and families, and the role of multidisciplinary teams in ensuring compassionate, patient-centred care.

The session provided participants with an integrated understanding of palliative care that balances clinical excellence with empathy and dignity. The discussions were highly relevant to the Sri Lankan healthcare context, encouraging reflection on culturally sensitive care, ethical practice, and service delivery challenges. The pre-congress programme effectively set the academic tone for the main congress by reinforcing the core principles of palliative medicine while equipping participants with practical insights to enhance the quality of care for patients and their families.





4th Annual Academic Sessions of the College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka

The 4th Annual Academic Sessions 2025 of the College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka was conducted as a well-structured and academically robust programme, reflecting the expanding scope and relevance of palliative care in Sri Lanka. The scientific session comprised a series of plenary lectures, symposia, free paper sessions, and poster presentations, designed to address both core principles and emerging priorities in palliative medicine.

Key plenary sessions focused on fundamental and evolving areas of practice, including comprehensive pain and symptom management, ethical and legal challenges in end-of-life care, and communication skills in serious illness. These plenaries provided evidence-based guidance while highlighting the importance of compassion, dignity, and patient-centred decision-making within diverse clinical contexts. Several thematic symposia addressed priority areas relevant to local practice. Symposia on integration of palliative care into

ANNUAL ACADEMIC SESSIONS 2025
 19-20th September 2025 | GalFace Hotel, Colombo

Registration Now Open
 Until the 5th of September 2025

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION
 Local participant Rs. 6500/+
 Non Local Participant USD 50

LATE REGISTRATIONS
 Local Participant Rs. 8000/+
 Non local participant USD 70

To Register
<https://forms.gle/aAZ7bNEFWwzWWho717>

Scan the QR Code

For queries contact
 +947726665016 / +94772389061
 officecpml@gmail.com

mainstream health services and community-based palliative care models stimulated discussion on service delivery within Sri Lanka's health system. Sessions on paediatric palliative care and geriatric palliative care explored age-specific needs, ethical considerations, and family involvement, emphasizing continuity of care across the life course.



Research and academic development were highlighted through free paper and poster sessions, where trainees and early-career researchers presented findings on symptom burden, quality of life, service evaluations, and innovative care approaches, encouraging scholarly discussion, critical appraisal, and mentorship, supporting the growth of research capacity in palliative medicine.



The Annual Academic Sessions provided a dynamic forum for knowledge exchange, professional development, and collaboration. By combining clinically relevant plenaries, focused symposia, and research presentations, the programme reinforced CPMSL's commitment to advancing high-quality, contextually appropriate palliative care.





Activities by CPMSL

Certificate Course on Wound Care for Medical Officers

The College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka conducted the Certificate Course on Wound Care for Medical Officers titled “Scientific Wound Care Management in Day-to-Day Practice – 2025” from 15th July to 05th August 2025, with sessions held online every Tuesday from 9.00 pm to 11.00 pm. The programme aimed to enhance the knowledge and clinical skills of medical officers in scientific and evidence-based wound management applicable to day-to-day practice. It was coordinated by Dr. Thusitha Kahaduwa and the sessions on the burden of wounds, wound disruption, wound biology, wound bed preparation, dressing selection, management of bedsores, continence and stoma issues, and wound prevention in primary care,

delivered by experts including Dr. Ranga Perera (President CPMSL and Consultant Oncosurgeon), Dr. Thushan Gunarathna (Consultant Vascular Surgeon and Senior Lecturer), Dr. Thusitha Kahaduwa (Palliative care and Wound care Practitioner), Dr. Kithsiri Senanayake (Consultant General Surgeon), Dr. Keerthi Rajapaksha (Consultant General Surgeon) and Dr. Hilary Fernando (Consultant Urological Surgeon).

Following the online sessions, a comprehensive hands-on training workshop was held on 9th August 2025 at the General Sir John Kotelawala Defense University Hospital. The workshop included a recap followed by practical demonstrations and supervised skill development facilitated by senior clinicians.



Management of a wound encountered in their clinical practice, demonstrating the application of the concepts was taught during the course. Certificates of successful completion were awarded upon submission and acceptance of the assignment. The course was accredited by the Education, Training & Research (ET&R) Unit and carried 15 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points. This initiative highlights the College's ongoing commitment to strengthening palliative and general clinical care in Sri Lanka through high-quality training in wound management.

Two-Day Workshop on Palliative Care

A two-day workshop on palliative care was successfully conducted on the 29th and 30th of July 2025 at the Nursing Training College Auditorium, Anuradhapura. The programme was organised collaboratively by the Anuradhapura Medical Association and the CPMSL. Two parallel programmes were conducted for Medical Officers and Nursing Officers. Dr Ranga Perera, Prof. Samadhi Rjapaksa, Dr Densil Gunasekara, Dr Keerthi Rajapaksha, and Dr Thusitha Kahaduwa Participated on behalf of the College. The Nurses Programme was facilitated by Prof. Lalitha Meegoda and the members of the Allied Health Professionals Wing of the CPMSL. The workshop brought together nursing officers and medical officers, with the aim of strengthening their competencies in delivering high-quality palliative care within clinical and community settings.

Day one of the workshop featured a series of comprehensive lecture-discussions conducted by a distinguished panel of experts in palliative medicine. The sessions covered fundamental principles of palliative care, communication with patients and families, pain and symptom management, holistic patient-centred care, and the psychosocial dimensions of supporting individuals with life-limiting illnesses. The interactive format encouraged active participation, with attendees raising questions, sharing clinical experiences, and reflecting on the challenges of integrating



palliative care into routine practice. The day emphasised the importance of multidisciplinary teamwork and highlighted practical approaches to improving patient comfort and quality of life. Day two of the workshop was dedicated to hands-on skills development, focusing on stoma care and wound care, two essential components of palliative management. Guided by trained specialists, participants engaged in practical demonstrations, model-based learning, and supervised practice sessions. The workshop allowed clinicians to enhance their technical skills in assessment, cleaning, dressing, and ongoing management of stomas and complex wounds. Emphasis was placed on infection control, patient education, and compassionate handling of vulnerable patients.



The two-day programme was well-received by participants, who valued both the theoretical insights and practical training provided. The event successfully strengthened local capacity for palliative care and reinforced the commitment of the AMA and CPMSL to advancing high-quality, compassionate care in the Anuradhapura district. The collaborative effort of the Allied Health Professionals Wing played a key role in delivering an impactful and professionally enriching training experience

Consultative workshop on National Strategic Plan on Healthcare Quality and Safety

A two-day consultative workshop to revise the National Strategic Plan on Healthcare Quality and Safety for 2026–2030 was held on 29–30 October at the Sapphire Hall, Courtyard by Marriott, Colombo. The workshop was organized by the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Directorate of the Ministry of Health, with the participation of key stakeholders and the mass media.

The revised strategic plan was aligned with the seven strategic directions of the WHO Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021–2030 and the National Health Master Plan of the Ministry of Health. Members of the College made valuable contributions to

the development of several key components of the plan, including high-level leadership, advocacy and governance; ensuring safe clinical care; strengthening safety culture; and fostering synergy and partnerships to improve healthcare quality and patient safety.



Consultative meeting on National Health Strategic Master Plan (2026–2035)

The College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka was represented at a consultative meeting focused on strengthening quality, safety, and strategic planning within the health sector. The meeting brought together key stakeholders to contribute expert perspectives towards future national health strategies, with a strong emphasis on patient-centred and equitable care. Participation from the College highlighted the importance of integrating palliative care principles into broader quality and safety frameworks. Dr. Renuka Jayathissa and Dr. Shashibrabha Nawaratne attended on behalf of the College and actively engaged in discussions, sharing insights from palliative care practice relevant to service delivery, policy development, and quality improvement initiatives.

Webinars



College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka
Monthly Webinar

Therapeutic use of oxygen in end-of-life care: Evidence, ethics and practice

 Speaker:
Dr. M. A. P. S. Premarathne
Registrar in Family Medicine

Join us
Date : 28.07.2025 (Monday)
Time : 8.30 -9.30 pm

Zoom link
<https://learn.zoom.us/j/95006973064?pwd=aStPWMIvab27hk8GjOR8qx9ZTEuz5.1>

July 2025

The College of Palliative Medicine in Sri Lanka organized its monthly webinar on 28th July, 2025. The event was conducted by Dr. M. A. P. S. Premarathne, Registrar in Family Medicine. She shared invaluable insights on "Therapeutic use of oxygen in end-of-life-care: Evidence, ethics and practice".

The webinar offered valuable insights into advancing palliative care for patients at end-of-life care and the audience engaged in a interactive discussion.

August 2025

The College of Palliative Medicine in Sri Lanka organized its monthly webinar on 26th August, 2025 by Dr Senitha Liyanage, Consultant Emergency Physician attached to Colombo South Teaching Hospital.

His lecture on "Compassionate Closure; End of Life care in Hospital Setting" delivered meaningful perspectives on patient-centred care and inspired an engaging exchange with the audience.



College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka
Monthly Webinar

Compassionate Closure : End-of-life care in Hospital Setting

 Speaker:
Dr. Senitha Liyanage
MBBS, MD(EM), MRCEM(UK), DCCM, DDM, CCA
Consultant Emergency Physician

Join us
Date : 26.08.2025 (Tuesday)
Time : 8.30 -9.30 pm

Zoom link
<https://learn.zoom.us/j/97071063947?pwd=bTUoVv5aGaLae11zge7B0CY8DSKsrl.1>



College of Palliative Medicine of Sri Lanka
Monthly Webinar

*"Healing hearts, honouring lives:
weaving the journey of palliative care"*



Speaker:
Dr. Ishanka Talagala
MBBS, FPC, PG Dip. Med. Edu.,
HNDIPPCA, MSc, MD (Community
Medicine)
Head, Senior Lecturer
Department of Community Medicine
and Family Medicine,
Faculty of Medicine
University of Moratuwa

Join us

Date : 25.09.2025 (Thursday)

Time : 8.30 -9.30 pm

Zoom link

<https://learn.zoom.us/j/94984369730?pwd=vbyUbEwdKbtEoZaf7RqoGOWzqSPpD.1>

Meeting ID: 949 8436 9730

Passcode: tN@5Qq0D

September 2025

The College of Palliative Medicine in Sri Lanka organized its monthly webinar on 25th September, 2025 by Dr Ishanka Talagala, Consultant Community Physician and Head, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Community Medicine and Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Moratuwa.

Her lecture on "Healing hearts, honouring lives: weaving the journey of palliative care" explored the journey of palliative care, honouring lives through patient-centred perspectives and active dialogue.

October 2025

The College of Palliative Medicine in Sri Lanka organized its monthly webinar on 30th October, 2025 by Dr. Nadisha Ratnasekera, a Dental Public Health professional, coordinator National Research Network-CanSPARK-LTC from Bruyère Research Institute, University of Ottawa.

Her lecture offered profound insights that can guide Sri Lanka in advancing long-term care.

LIVE WEBINAR

Beyond Silos: Lessons Learnt from a National Network in Long-Term Care in Canada

30 OCTOBER

8.30 - 9.30 PM

Meeting ID: 997 8405 9775
Passcode: +YmBzf6x

Dr. Nadisha Ratnasekera
National Research Network
Coordinator - CanSPARK-LTC
Bruyère Research Institute,
University of Ottawa

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