



# IMPA

ISSUE 05 | VOLUME - 29 | MAY 2025

THE OFFICIAL NEWS LETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT  
MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ASSOCIATION

# NEWS

[www.impa-sl.com](http://www.impa-sl.com)



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN...



As we reflect on the month of May, I am pleased to highlight a series of meaningful engagements that continue to elevate the academic and professional standards of our organization.

We were privileged to host two exceptional presentations as part of our Continuing Medical Education (CME) program. Dr Upul Wickramarachchi, Consultant Interventional Cardiologist, delivered an insightful session on **Acute Coronary Syndromes**, enriching our understanding of critical cardiac care. We also extend our gratitude to Dr Joel Arudchelvam, Consultant Vascular and Transplant Surgeon, for his comprehensive presentation on **"Chronic venous diseases"**, which added immense value to our CME program.

Looking ahead, I am delighted to share that the **IMPA Presidential Induction** is scheduled for **June 2025**, as planned and the scheduled date will be notified shortly. This significant event will be partially **sponsored by CIC Holdings**, and we are grateful for their support.

With deep sorrow, I announce the passing of **Dr Pathirajamudali**. Condolence to his family and loved ones. A former Treasurer of IMPA, where his unwavering commitment has reflected on IMPA's rich history.

Lastly, a heartfelt appreciation goes to **Mrs Champa**, our dedicated administrator, whose consistent service and commitment have been instrumental in the smooth functioning of our activities.

Together, let us continue to uphold the values and vision of IMPA as we grow stronger as a community of medical professionals.

Warm regards,

Thank you,  
Yours Sincerely,

**Dr. Sanath Hettige** MBBS, DFM, MD, FCGP

President, Independent Medical Practitioners Association of Sri Lanka

Board Certified Specialist in Family Medicine,

Honorary Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo,

Chief Scientist, Oil of Dermae Laboratories & Dermae Research Medical Center

Chairman, Health & Nutrition Committee, Organization of Professional Association of Sri Lanka

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**The Independent Medical Practitioners Association had the CPD program on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May**  
at the OPA auditorium, 275/75, Prof. Stanley Wijesundara Mawatha, Colombo 7

**Two eminent speakers made the following presentations;**

## **“Acute Coronary Syndromes”**

by

### **Dr Upul Wickramarachchi**

MBBS (Peradeniya), MRCP (UK), MD (Research, UEA, UK), CCT (Cardiology, UK)  
Consultant Interventional Cardiologist, Lanka Hospitals, Colombo.  
Visiting Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, University of Sri Jayewardenapura and

## **“Chronic venous diseases”**

by

### **Dr Joel Arudchelvam**

MBBS, MD, MRCS, FCSSL  
Consultant Vascular and Transplant Surgeon. Senior Lecturer in Surgery.  
Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.



## Calling all our outstation members !

In the past, we had several active Regional / Provincial Chapters of the IMPA. Many of them may have become inactive or defunct. The IMPA is unaware of the events and activities done even by the few active Chapters.

We are planning to reactivate or establish our Regional / Provincial Chapters. IMPA is prepared to provide any assistance, if required.

This call is for our outstation members to get together within their Region / Province to reactivate / establish IMPA Regional / Provincial Chapters.

Kindly send the news and information about your Chapter for publication in this Newsletter.

*President and the Council of IMPA*

# IMPA Representatives representing the various Committees of IMPA and representing IMPA at different meetings and events organized by other agencies

## Organization of Professional Associations of Sri Lanka (OPA)

Dr. Sanath Hettige	- Exco
Dr. S.M. Goonasekera	- Forum
Prof. Sanath Lamabadusuriya	- Forum

## Private Health Sector Regulatory Council (PHSRC)

Dr. D.K.D. Mathew

## Antibiotic Microbial Resistance (AMR) - Technical Advisory Committee(TAC) - National Action Plan (NAP) National Advisory Committee (NAC)

Dr. A.H.A. Hazari  
Dr. Iyanthi Abeyewickreme  
Dr. Sujatha Samarakoon  
Dr. Kayathri Periasamy

## Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM)

Dr Sarath Samarage	- Member
Dr.Priyadarshani Samarasinghe	- Alternate Member

## National Programme for Tuberculosis Control and Chest Diseases (NPTCCD)

Dr Eranthee Walgampaya	- Public Private Mix (PPM)
Dr. Priyadarshani Samarasinghe	- Steering Committee Paediatric TB
Prof. Jennifer Perera	- TB Advisory Committee

## National STD/AIDS Control Programme

Dr Sanath Hettige	- National Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS
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## Journal Committee

<b>Editor</b>	- Dr. Neelamani Hewageegana	
<b>Editorial board</b>	- Dr. Palitha Abeykoon	Dr. S.M. Samarage
	Dr. S.A.P. Gnanissara	Dr. A.L.P. de S. Seneviratne
	Dr. A.H.A. Hazari	Dr. Sanath Hettige
	Dr. S.M. Goonesekera	Prof. Sanath Lamabadusuriya
	Dr. Iyanthi Abeyewickreme	

## E-Newsletter

<b>Editor</b>	- Dr. Neelamani Hewageegana	
<b>Editorial board</b>	- Dr. Palitha Abeykoon	Dr. S.M. Samarage
	Dr. S.M. Goonesekera	Dr. S.A.P. Gnanissara
	Dr. A.H.A. Hazari	Dr. Sanath Hettige
	Prof. Sanath Lamabadusuriya	Dr. A.L.P. de S. Seneviratne
	Dr. Iyanthi Abeyewickreme	

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### **IMPA Website / Information Technology and Media Committee:**

- Dr. A.H.A. Hazari  
Dr. Sabith Salieh  
Dr. Radhik Wijesooriya

-  
Dr. Sanath Hettige  
Dr. Eranthee Walgampaya  
Mr. Nilupul Gunarathne

### **Presidential Induction Ceremony Organizing Committee**

Dr. Sanath Hettige  
Dr. Sabith Salieh  
Dr. Sujatha Samarakoon  
Dr. Radhik Wijesooriya

Dr. A.H.A. Hazari  
Dr. Sarath Samarage  
Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratne

### **Continuous Professional Development /Medical Update Committee**

Dr. Sanath Hettige,  
Dr. Sabith Salieh,  
Dr. Radhik Wijesooriya  
Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratne

Dr. A.H.A. Hazari,  
Dr. Sarath Samarage  
Dr. Eranthee Walgampaya  
Dr. A.L.P.de S. Seneviratne

# IMPA expects to strengthen the ties with Country Coordinating Mechanism of Sri Lanka (CCMSL) for another three years.

The Secretariat, CCMSL has invited expressions of interest (EOI) from eligible organizations and persons to be elected as members of the CCMSL and/or to participate in voting process for the selection of CCMSL members for its new term (2025-28).

IMPA has expressed the interest to be a member as one of the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) for the new term as per the decision taken at the Council Meeting held on 18th May 2025.

The Global Fund was established in 2002 with the overall aim of attracting, managing and disbursing resources to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and strengthen health systems. The Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) is the “national consensus group” which has been established in response to the requirements

and recommendations of the Global Fund (GF) as the body to provide overall guidance and oversight for securing and use of GF grants. This is in accordance with the GF recognition that through a country driven, coordinated, multisectoral approach, significant impact can be made to reduce disease burden, illness and death from these three diseases.

Countries seeking GF support are expected to include as CCM members, representatives from Government, Academia, Civil Society and Multilateral and Bilateral Development Partners in the country. CCM members serve in a voluntary and honorary capacity and their active participation is essential for the success of the programmes. The Civil Society Representatives on the CCMSL will be elected by their constituencies.

The breakdown of the constituencies of the Civil Society membership is as follows:

<b>1. NGOs and Community - based Organizations</b>	<b>5 Representatives</b>
<b>2. Key population (KP)</b>	<b>2 "</b>
<b>3. Private sector</b>	<b>1 Representative</b>
<b>4. Faith based organizations</b>	<b>1 "</b>
<b>5. Academia</b>	<b>1 "</b>
<b>6. People living with or affected by HIV/AIDS (PLWD)</b>	<b>1 "</b>
<b>7. People living with or affected by TB (PLWD)</b>	<b>1 "</b>

IMPA is a proud and an active member of CCM for the current term 2023-25 and has conducted a very successful programme of establishing a network of member associations of Organization of Professional Associations (OPA) for prevention of AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria on 28th November 2024.

IMPA has applied to be a member in one of the categories of Academia or Private Sector or Non-Governmental Organizations. The election will be held on the 18th of June 2025 and hope IMPA will succeed and be selected as a member of the CCMSL in one of the categories it has applied for.

# IMPA Journal Guidelines

Articles are requested for publication in the IMPA journal 2025, to be released at the IMPA AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> of December. The deadline for the submission of articles is 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Please follow the guidelines given below for the submission of articles.

## 1. Scope and Focus

IMPA Journal is published annually by the Independent Medical Practitioners Association of Sri Lanka. The Journal will be released at the AGM of that particular year. This is a Medical Journal with the ISSN 2465-6135. The journal welcomes submissions that contribute to the advancement of knowledge and practice in independent medical practice, including but not limited to:

- Clinical case studies and research
- Health policy and regulation analysis
- Practice management and innovation
- Ethics, law, and patient care
- Continuing medical education
- Experiences from practice
- Any Other relevant articles and news

## 2. Article Types

- Original Research Articles (1000-3000 words)
- Case Reports (800-1500 words)
- Review Articles (2000-3500 words)
- Opinion/Commentary (500-1200 words)
- Practice Pearls (300-500 words)
- Letters to the Editor (up to 500 words)
- Book/Resource Reviews (up to 800 words)

## 3. Formatting Guidelines

- Submit in MS Word (.doc/.docx) format.
- Use 12 pt Times New Roman, double-spaced.
- Include title, author name(s), credentials, and affiliation.
- Abstract (150-250 words) for original research and reviews.
- Use Vancouver style reference.
- Images, charts, and figures should be high-resolution and captioned.
- Avoid plagiarism. All sources must be properly cited.

## 4. Ethical Considerations

- Patient consent must be obtained for identifiable case reports/images.
- Conflict of interest and funding sources must be disclosed.
- Submissions must comply with ethical standards for medical publishing.

## 5. Submission Process

Submit articles via email to [champa.impa@gmail.com]

- Each submission undergoes editorial review, and selected articles are sent for peer review.
- Authors will be notified of acceptance, revisions, or rejection

## 6. Copyright and Permissions

- Authors retain copyright but grant the journal the right to publish.
- Reproduction of previously published content must have appropriate permissions.

## 7. Contact

For inquiries, reach out to:

**Dr Neelamani Sandhaya Rajapaksa Hewageegana**  
[MD(Timisoara, Romania), MSc, MD (Colombo, Sri Lanka), PhD (Sheffield Hallam, UK)]

*Editor IMPA (Independent Medical Practitioners Association) Journal Email: drneelamani@yahoo.com*

## Links to Interesting Articles

### **IMPA**

Link : [impa-sl.com](https://impa-sl.com)

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### **Kaleidoscope Let's Talk Prof Suranjit Seneviratne on allergies, immune diseases**

Link : [https://youtu.be/lkYmUblHvrU?si=7AO1mW\\_556bnFggP](https://youtu.be/lkYmUblHvrU?si=7AO1mW_556bnFggP)

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### **WHO SEARO WhatsApp**

Link : <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaKbtyxFsn0Xc1J2YD1Q>

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### **Interaction of government institutions with Foreign States**

Link : [https://www.presidentsoffice.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Circular\\_01\\_2025-E.pdf](https://www.presidentsoffice.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Circular_01_2025-E.pdf)

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### **E-Mail Policy Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka Ministry of Technology**

Link : [https://mode.gov.lk/assets/files/Email\\_Policy-f3330383fc97c938e92615e5dad0417c.pdf](https://mode.gov.lk/assets/files/Email_Policy-f3330383fc97c938e92615e5dad0417c.pdf)

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### **'Lifestyles influence how genes behave'**

Link : ['Lifestyles influence how genes behave'](#)

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### **WHO future-pandemics**

Link : <https://www.who.int/news/item/20-05-2025-world-health-assembly-adopts-historic-pandemic-agreement-to-make-the-world-more-equitable-and-safer-from-future-pandemics>

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### **Preventing-Child-Sexual-Abuse-for-Parents**

Link : <https://ccpsl.lk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/A-Guide-on-Preventing-Child-Sexual-Abuse-for-Parents.pdf>



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CAA/CP/01/Pub.Notice/01/2025

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 Date

22/05/2025

### Hazardous Skin Products Containing Mercury

S/N	Name of the Product	Batch no	Hg content detected/ ppm
1	Arena Gold	No batch number on label.	30080
2	Athisayam	No batch number on label.	Peroxide Value and Mesophilic Bacteria do not comply with the Specifications of Sri Lanka Standards for Skin Creams & Lotions. (SLS 743)
3	B Black Magic Beauty Cream	D712B235	14520
4	Beauty Booster Beauty Cream	No batch number on label.	32980
5	Beauty Care Day Cream	No batch number on label.	5.1
6	Carotone Natural Glow Clarifying	1053387	312
7	Every Way Beauty Cream	No batch number on label.	37250
8	Fiona Anti Aging	No batch number on label.	4265
9	Fresh & Clear	786010	31540
10	Fresh & White	No batch number on label.	8.1
11	Fresh & White	No batch number on label.	28340
12	Fresh & White Body Butter	No batch number on label.	1.7
13	Fresh White	No batch number on label.	17632
14	Glow	No batch number on label.	7845

  
**Chairman, Consumer Affairs Authority**

Hope this gets circulat... Read more

# 27<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS OF THE SRI LANKA COLLEGE OF PAEDIATRICIANS



Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians  
in collaboration with  
Ceylon College of Family Physicians



## Dedicated Track Focusing on: **Paediatric Essentials For General Practitioners**

10<sup>th</sup> June, 2025 | 8.30 AM onwards | Monarch Imperial, Kotte

### GUEST LECTURE

**Caring for Wounds in Children: From Scrapes to Stitches** | *Dr Romesh Gunasekera*

### CASE-BASED DISCUSSIONS

**Head Injury in Children: When is Hospitalization necessary?** | *Dr Lalith Gamage*

**Fungal Infections: Tips for Management** | *Dr Sriyani Samaraweera*

**Paediatric Eye Conditions: Should not be Missed** | *Dr Hiranya Abeysekera*

### SYMPOSIUM: RESPIRATORY PEARLS

**Improving Inhaler Use in Children with Asthma** | *Dr Channa de Silva*

**Airway Emergencies in Children: What Every Doctor Should Know**  
*Professor Simon Craig*

### NOT TO BE MISSED CASES IN PAEDIATRICS

**A Child with Episodic Crying** | *Dr I R Rangunathan*

**A Child with Hypotension: A Diagnostic Challenge** | *Professor Gitanjali Sathiadas*

**Acute Chorea in a Child: Unravelling the Cause** | *Dr Manel Panapitiya*

**Infection-Associated Shock: Beyond Septic Shock** | *Dr Jagath Ranasinghe*

**A Hidden Culprit: Severe Pallor and Cyanosis in a Previously Healthy Child**  
*Professor Kavinda Dayasiri*

### INTERACTIVE QUIZ

**Paediatric Radiology: Essentials and Interactive Quiz** | *Dr Eranga Ganewatte*

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Date 2025.05.17

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**සுகாதාර මණ්ඩලය වෙබ් අඩවිය**  
**Ministry of Health & Mass Media**

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**2023 අංක 09 දරණ දූෂණ විරෝධී පනතට අනුව 2025 වර්ෂයට අදාළව වත්කම් හා බැරකම් ප්‍රකාශ කිරීම.**

උත්තර කදුණු සම්බන්ධයෙන් මගේ අංක CA/GCA/ව.ආ.බ./2025 හා 2025.04.11 දිනැති ලිපියට වැඩිමහත් වශයෙනි.

02. ඒ අනුව 2023 අංක 9 දරණ දූෂණ විරෝධී පනතේ 80. (1) (ඒ) වගන්තිය යටතේ රජයේ සියලුම සෞඛ්‍ය සහ දේශපාලනික සේවක සියලුම ආණ්ඩුක්‍රමලේඛන නිලධාරීන් වත්කම් හා බැරකම් ප්‍රකාශ කිරීම සහ 30 හෝ ඊට අධික වශයෙන් දින 30 ක් සඳහන්ව ඇත. එබැවින් සිය රෝහල්/ආයතනයේ සේවය කරන සහ සඳහන් කතෘතුරු ද ඇතුළත් සියලුම ආණ්ඩුක්‍රමලේඛන නිලධාරීන් එම ප්‍රකාශ 2025.06.30 දින හෝ ඊට අධික වශයෙන් ප්‍රධානී වෙත ලබා දීම සඳහායි.

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3. සියලුම සේවක නිලධාරීන්
4. විද්‍යාත්මක සේවයේ නිලධාරීන් (වෛද්‍ය විද්‍යාඥ, ජීව රසායන නිලධාරීන් ආදී කතෘතුරු)
5. සියලුම රෝහල් ලේකම්වරු
6. විශේෂ ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ වෛද්‍ය නිලධාරී ඇතුළු වෛද්‍ය සේවයේ විශේෂ/අධි/විශේෂ නිලධාරීන්
7. පරිපූරක හා අතුරු වෛද්‍ය සේවාවේ විශේෂ/අධි/විශේෂ නිලධාරීන්
8. දේශපාලනික සේවක කතෘතුරු දරන සියලුම ආණ්ඩුක්‍රමලේඛන නිලධාරීන් (ආදි පනතට නියමිත නිලධාරීන්, මහේස්ත්‍රවතු සේවක නිලධාරීන් ආදී කතෘතුරු)

ඒ අනුව සියලුම ආණ්ඩුක්‍රමලේඛන නිලධාරීන්ගේ වත්කම් හා බැරකම් ප්‍රකාශ අදාළ ආයතන ප්‍රධානියා විසින් ලබා ගෙන 2025.03.27 දිනැති දේශපාලන සේවයේ දූෂණ විරෝධී පනතට අනුව 2025 වර්ෂයට අදාළව වත්කම් හා බැරකම් ප්‍රකාශ කිරීම සඳහා විමර්ශන කොමිෂන් සභාව වෙත යොමු කරන ලෙස කාරුණිකව දන්වමි. එම දින 30 ට අධික වශයෙන් දින 30 ක් සඳහන්ව ඇත. එබැවින් සිය රෝහල්/ආයතනයේ සේවය කරන සහ සඳහන් කතෘතුරු ද ඇතුළත් සියලුම ආණ්ඩුක්‍රමලේඛන නිලධාරීන් එම ප්‍රකාශ ලබා දීම සඳහායි. එම ප්‍රකාශ ලබා දීම සඳහා අවස්ථාවලදී වැටුප්පත් දඩ පුද්ගලික අය කිරීම සහ පවුලටත් එම ප්‍රකාශ ලබා දීම ප්‍රවේශවන්නේ නම් අදාළ නිලධාරීන් සම්බන්ධයෙන් දූෂණ විරෝධී පනතේ 90 වගන්තිය ප්‍රකාරව කටයුතු සිදු කිරීමට සිදුවන බැවින් අදාළ සියලුම නිලධාරීන් දැනුවත් කරන මෙන් වැඩිදුරටත් දන්වමි. (අ.ප්‍ර.මු.ප-01)

  
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KALEIDOSCOPE



Something little spoken about but posing significant health concerns are allergies and immune system disorders. About 30-40% of the world's population is affected by allergic conditions and asthma – a very common immune-related condition which affects about 81 million children worldwide.

On 'Kaleidoscope' was an expert in allergology and immunology, a Consultant in Clinical Immunology and Allergy at the Royal Free Hospital and University College London (UCL) England, directing the Centre for Mast Cell Disorders, Professor Suranjith Seneviratne. He joined us to discuss this area of medical health that is not often focused on. He is also the President of the United Kingdom (UK)-Sri Lanka Immunology Foundation, contributing significantly to immunology education in Sri Lanka.

Following are excerpts from the interview:

What are the most prevalent allergic and immunological disorders currently observed in Sri Lanka?

Allergic disorders are in relation to what we inhale, which could be dust mite allergy, pet allergy, mould or cockroach-related allergy. When it comes to the next group of conditions, it's food allergies, which is quite significant in Sri Lanka. The third group is medication related allergies, including a whole range of drugs, antibiotics and a group of drugs called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. These are not really allergies but sensitivities, taken as a simple manifestation.

What has contributed to the increasing prevalence of both allergic and immunological disorders?

Lifestyle factors are the biggest contributor. When I went to the UK in 1999 for my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), allergic and autoimmune disorders weren't seen as major issues in Sri Lanka. But, as lifestyles changed, with children spending more time indoors, eating out more, and living in air-tight houses with air-conditioning, a leg was begun to rise.

What recent advancements are there in immunology for treating disorders?

Immunotherapy has been around for over 100 years, starting at the St. Mary's Hospital in London for pollen and bee and wasp sting allergies. Initially, it was injectable, causing adverse effects. Now, we use sublingual therapy – placing a tablet under the tongue daily for three years. For severe allergies, biological treatment, which are injectable under the skin, offer significant advances for patients with severe asthma, allergies, or anaphylaxis.

What role does genetic predisposition play in the development of autoimmune diseases?

As in any autoimmune or allergy disorder, genetics



St. Mary's Hospital in London began immunotherapy for pollen and bee and wasp sting allergies over 100 years ago



Asthma affects about 81 million children worldwide

# 'Lifestyles influence how genes behave'

● Royal Free Hospital and UCL Clinical Immunology and Allergy Consultant Prof. Suranjith Seneviratne on allergies and immune system disorders



Royal Free Hospital and UCL Clinical Immunology and Allergy Consultant Prof. Suranjith Seneviratne

definitely plays a part. If you have a parent or both parents with an allergic or autoimmune disease, it has a contribution towards the child getting the allergic or autoimmune disease. But, in addition, it's a combination of genetic characteristics together with environmental factors. That interaction with the environment can alter some of the elements in the gene. We use this term called epigenetics – it's just technical – but the way the gene behaves can be affected by the environment. So, it's a combination of the two.

Our lifestyles, including fast food, can influence how genes behave. In certain environments, allergies or autoimmune triggers

might not usually cause a reaction. However, factors like pollution, climate change, and low vitamin D levels can affect the gene function, leading to the manifestation of diseases.

How has Covid-19 affected all this?

We know that we went through a very difficult time with Covid. But, we learned a lot too, in terms of preventing disorders. For example, I think that the vaccine scenario will improve a lot for chronic infections and cancers. Cancers, which were not treatable, are now treatable – certain vaccines are being trialled for cancer; and that knowledge came from the Covid pandemic, despite it having a big, big effect on us.

Factors like pollution, climate change and low vitamin D levels can affect gene function, leading to the manifestation of diseases

How can early intervention help or reduce the risk of allergies in later years?

It can in several ways. This relates to the hygiene hypothesis, which suggests that being too clean might actually increase the risk of the immune system going off track. For example, researchers found that children living on farms in Switzerland had lower rates of asthma compared to children in cities. That was the first indication.

In Israel, researchers noticed that Jewish children were introduced to peanuts very early in life, unlike in London, where peanut introduction was delayed. As a result, peanut allergies were much higher among children in London. So now, we don't delay in introducing certain foods.

In the past, when a mother was pregnant, she was often advised to avoid nuts for the baby's benefit. But, that's no longer recommended, because holding back these foods can increase

the risk of allergies rather than prevent them.

What challenges exist in diagnosing and then managing immune disorders?

I think it's an evolving field, and we are learning a great deal. Twenty-five years ago, what we knew was quite different from what we understand today. So, the revolution in this area has brought significant change, because ongoing the basic tests that we routinely perform, we now possess two genetic tests.

The major issue however is cost, that's where there's a big difference between the West and the East, because in many cases are expensive as they must, for instance, be conducted in specialised laboratories. But, as more tests become available in India, Southeast Asia, and our region, the prices tend to drop, just like they did with certain drugs.

What needs to be done to improve public awareness and to improve education in allergy prevention and managing it?

Dealing with allergies requires involvement from everyone, not just doctors, but also nurses, teachers, and other healthcare personnel. All of whom should communicate in a way that's easy to understand. High-level, abstract theories don't help. Clinicians often emphasise that preventing every infection isn't good for immune development and that we shouldn't clean our hands too often.

How do lifestyle factors – diet, exercise, the environment – impact the immune system's health as well as susceptibility to allergies?

The environment is absolutely key. If you think about it, we carry about 1kg of bacteria in our gut and there's no reason to worry that much bacteria unless they're doing something important.

The microbiome, as we call it, plays a crucial role. These bacteria constantly communicate with the immune system, influencing immune cells and how they behave. This is why

antibiotic overuse and misuse are so harmful; they disrupt that ecosystem.

Then, there's exercise and nutrition. If your diet is poor, your vitamin D levels are low, and you're not active it puts extra strain on the immune system. That's because the immune system ends up handling tasks it shouldn't have to. Its primary role is to protect the body from dangerous viruses, bacteria, and fungi. But, if it's busy reducing inflammation caused by a bad diet, for example, then you're wasting valuable immune resources.

If you're looking at the allergies that Sri Lanka has, what are the allergies with the highest prevalence?

It would be aeroallergens. The house dust mite is the major allergen found in homes. The issue is that houses have changed. People are living in more confined spaces, windows are kept closed, and air conditioners are constantly running – often placed near the bed. Water collects and dust settles on the bed. People are also putting carpets on the floor. Children spend more time indoors in the city instead of playing outside. Secondly, mould allergy and cockroach allergy. Those three are very significant.

When it comes to food allergies, the pattern is different from the UK. There, peanut allergy is more common. Here, it's other foods: cashew nuts, pistachio, crab, and certain kinds of fish. Bee's leg is a concern in Sri Lanka, which we don't see as much in the UK. It's a problem because certain components related to beef can be present in vaccines. So, you need to be careful. These are the common allergies.

As for drug allergies, penicillin is a key example. The United States Food and Drug Administration has noted it too. And I always tell patients, "Don't just say, 'I'm allergic to medicines' when you visit a doctor, because after the doctor might avoid giving you treatment at all. Speak with someone, discuss your reactions, and know which medicines you're allergic to – or at least have an idea – so



that suitable alternatives can be used.

How would you advise a household to treat a person with a mild allergy or an allergy that is almost life-threatening?

For a mild allergy, if you want to take an anti-itching, that's fine. For example, if you have a rash or sneezing in the morning, an antihistamine can help settle it. But, if the symptoms are more chronic and persist for a longer period, then it's important to be assessed by a physician.

There are other types of allergies where people develop multiple lumps on the skin, wheals, or hives – what some people might call 'puffiness' – and these cases need proper treatment. It's not just about taking prednisolone or steroids and getting it under control for the moment. It's important to get a proper management plan and stick to that treatment plan, so that the condition stays under control over time.

Certain vaccines are being trialled for cancer, and that knowledge came from the Covid pandemic

What future direction do you see allergology and immunology taking to address the growing trends of allergies and immune disorders?

Immunology and allergology are fields that people didn't really understand twenty years ago. But, especially after Covid, there's more awareness; people want to understand how the immune system protects the body.

Immunology specialists are now involved in almost every field. Rheumatologists, cardiologists, infectious disease specialists, nephrologists, and other specialists need to understand aspects of immunology. There's a lot of cross-talk and interaction between specialities. Advances in immunology are now feeding back into other specialities like cardiology and respiratory medicine. So, collaboration is essential.

Why did you get interested in specialising in allergology and immunology?

I happened somewhat by chance. I received a Commonwealth Scholarship to go to Oxford University to read for my PhD. At the time, my supervisor was a dermatologist and the project that I was given focused on studying T-cells in eczema and asthma. From that point onward, I began training as a clinical immunologist. I first trained as a clinical immunologist and then continued along that path. And for the past 25 years, I've been working in that field consistently.

The author is the host, director, and co-producer of the weekly digital programme 'Kaleidoscope with Surijith Reddy' which can be viewed on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. She has over three decades of experience in print, electronic, and social media.



## Obituary Notice - Dr. H.L. Pathirajamudali

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Dr. Pathirajamudali, a respected medical community member and a dedicated leader within the Independent Medical Practitioners Association (IMPA), Sri Lanka.

Dr. Pathirajamudali served with distinction as the Treasurer of IMPA, where his unwavering commitment, integrity, and meticulous stewardship of financial responsibilities played a vital role in the association's progress and stability.

The President, the council and the members of IMPA extend their heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones. His memory will remain in our hearts.

May he attain the supreme bliss of Nibbana.

*Independent Medical Practitioners Association  
(IMPA) Sri Lanka*

# Felicitations

Heartiest Congratulations and Good wishes from the IMPA President, Council and the Members to Professor Jenifer Perera, Professor Indika Karunathilake, and Dr. Nihal Abeysinghe for their recent appointments





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